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THE JUGGLER OF NANKIN

THE GRANDEE'S PLOT.

A Story of the Celestial Empire.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

[CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER VI.

A CURIOUS DISCOVERY.



SOON after the juggler had gone, Paul began to think intently of the plan he had conceived. As he near as he could judge by the moon, it was an hour past midnight. There were but a few hours left to him before daylight, and he considered some better means of escape than the one he had now in his mind; but when his mind was made up he had resolved to make the venture. He re-loaded the barrel of the pistol he had discharged, and having seen that the other barrels were safe he went once more to the pedestal. He drew his dagger, and with its haft he knocked smartly upon the stone. It produced a sharp, ringing sound, and ere long he heard a knock from the inside. He remembered the whistle which he had heard given by the man whom he now knew to be the prince, and he thought of the little ivory instrument he had obtained from the pocket of the house. He drew it out and blew upon it, sharply and shrilly, as he had heard the prince do, and in a moment more a portion of the rock seemed to sink away. Within he saw a middle-aged woman who wore a lighted candle in her hand, but she did not look particularly at him. She only seemed to observe that the one who had summoned her was ready to come in, and then she started down.

Paul hesitated a moment, and during that moment there seemed a thousand thoughts rushing through his mind; but his courage was good, and he stepped in through the aperture. Here a new difficulty presented itself. By the light of the candle which the woman carried he could see that the way led down a long flight of stone steps, and she was nearly half-way down. How was he to shut the aperture up? He looked behind him, and all around, but he could see nothing that seemed made for that purpose. The woman had stopped and looked back, and with a sudden thought Paul put his hand out through the opening as though he were looking to see that all was safe. This gave him time for thought. He remembered that the movable part of the rock had sank down, and of course it must be lifted up again. Perhaps it was so hung that it would lift up easily. Upon this thought he drew in his head and reached down. He felt a ring, which he seized, and lifted with all his might, but he had no need to have laid out half the strength, for the rock came up easily, and slid into its place with a sharp click.

As soon as the woman saw that the place was shut she turned and pursued her way down again, not having noticed in the gloom of the place, who it was that followed. One thought now came into her mind which made him feel comparatively safe. If there had been a man in the place he would certainly have come to open the passage. This circumstance gave the youth new courage, and he followed on with less hesitation. At the foot of the stairs he came to a narrow, vaulted passage through which the woman walked without turning, and Paul kept far enough behind to be in the gloom. After following around a gentle curve the woman opened a door to the left and passed through, but even here she did not stop for her follower to come up. When Paul passed in at the door he saw that the woman had already opened another door, through the opening of which came a stream of rich, mellow light, and through this opening she disappeared. The youth followed on, and when he had passed the second door he found himself in a large apartment, and he saw his guide just disappearing behind a heavy silk-curtain that hung in one corner of the place. He stopped and gazed about him, and for a while he was fairly bewildered by the scene which was

thus opened to his view. The room was spacious, and adorned with every luxury that wealth could afford. From the centre of the arched ceiling hung a cluster of crystal lanterns, the soft beams from which bathed the place in a flood of light almost equal to noonday. Upon a rich couch, at one end of the apartment, reclined the form of a female. At first she did not notice who had entered, but gradually she turned her eyes towards the door, and as she met the gaze of our hero she started to her feet.

"This is not Fank-king!" she uttered, almost in a whisper.

"No, lady," quickly returned Paul, "I have come in Fank-king's place."

The youth spoke so calmly, and his answer was so frank, that the female seemed to be at once disarmed of all fear, and Paul had an opportunity to view her. Never before had he seen a being so lovely. She could not have been over twenty years of age, and it really seemed as though every hour of her life had added some new charm to her person. Her skin was as fair as the new-blown lily, and upon her cheeks dwelt the blush of the newly opened rose. Her hair was black as the sparkling jet, and its clustered curls hung freely over her faultless neck and shoulders. Her eyes, which were large, dark and brilliant, were shaded by long silky lashes, and her brow, upon which rested a diadem of pearls, was clear and frank. Her form was light and airy, for her dress was not like that worn generally by her countrywomen. But her form being enveloped in the garb of a house it could not have detracted from the beauty of her face—that was a sphere of its own, a sphere in which loveliness reigned supreme.

"Did the prince send you here?" asked the girl, slightly lowering her eyes before the enraptured gaze of the youth.

"May I sit down and tell you my errand?" asked Paul, after a few moments' hesitation.

The girl did not hesitate in her answer, nor did she exhibit the least fear, though it must be confessed that she showed much surprise.

"Of course I have nothing to fear," she said. "You have a right here, or you would not be here. Let me know why you are come?"

"I have come in Fank-king's place," returned the youth. "He will come here no more. Are you sorry that he is to stay away?"

"Do you speak truly?" quickly asked the girl, looking up into the young man's face. "Is it true that Fank-king is to be here no more?"

"Certainly it is, lady."

"Then I am very glad," uttered the lovely girl, in a quick, frank tone, "for Fank-king was not kind to me. I hope you will be more kind and generous."

"As kind as heaven itself," said Paul, seating himself upon the couch by the fair girl's side, and removing his cap. "Could my heart hold a feeling of ill for such a one, I would tear it out as a thing not fit to bear with life."

The excitement under which Paul had labored for the last few hours, and the physical exertions consequent thereon, had served to loosen the skull-cap which he wore, and in removing his outer cap they both came off, and the dark, glossy, wavy hair fell about his neck and temples. The girl started, and a quick flush suffused her features. Paul noticed the mishap, and with a quick smile he said:

"I hope my head will not frighten you. I follow the customs of my country as nearly as possible, but I cannot deprive myself of the covering and protection which God has given me."

"O, I do not blame you," replied the girl, with a sort of twinkling, appreciating glance.

"We have but few heads that are worth protecting, and hence, I suppose, the fashion."

She smiled as she spoke, and for a few moments Paul was perfectly entranced. He remembered his dreams, and the phantasy became more and more real. He gazed into the features of his companion, and his heart beat so wildly that for a while he was unable to speak. For the time he forgot that he had laid himself liable to danger, he forgot that he had taken a human life—he forgot all save the presence of the being who had enchanted him. Under

other circumstances the feeling he now experienced might not have been so sudden, but his strange dreams had prepared the way, and he now gave his heart up without a struggle.

"Lady," he said, at length gaining the power and the courage to speak, "it may be a strange tale that I shall tell to you; but first you must assuredly know that in me there can dwell no harm. Tell me, if under any circumstances, you should fear me?"

"I know not why I should," replied she, speaking very low, and looking into the youth's handsome, bold features with peculiar earnestness. There was surely a deeper tinge of the rose upon her cheeks, and the emotion even reached to her eyes. "I do not think I should fear you," she added, "for you do not look like one who could willingly do harm to any person."

"You do surely speak in justice," said Paul, and then, with a slight smile, and in a light tone, he added: "But just for the whim—just to please a passing thought—just to know how much there can be in a countenance—suppose—mind, I only suppose the case—suppose the prince had not sent me here—suppose I had come here without the knowledge of any one save myself, and that Prince Kong-ki never even saw me?"

"O, that would be impossible."

"But suppose it were possible?"

"Then I should first wish to know why you came?"

"But you are too fast," said Paul, with another smile—a smile which was as frank and open as the sunbeams at noonday. "The question is, should you fear me before you knew my business?"

The girl hung down her head for a moment, and then again she gazed up into the youth's face. There was a peculiar light in her dark eye, and the long silky lashes even seemed to droop while she gazed.

"I do not think I should fear you," she whispered; "but I should fear for you, for you would be in greater danger than myself."

"I know not why you should fear for me," uttered Paul, going deeper and deeper into the meshes that were surrounding him.

"Why—because you would be in danger," returned the girl, with perfect simplicity. "Of course you must know that this would be a very dangerous place."

"O, certainly—I am aware of all that. But do not start now—do not fear me when I tell the truth. I am just as I have supposed. I know not the prince, nor have I ever seen him but once, and even then he did not see me."

"You trifle, sir," uttered the girl, starting with amazement.

"Upon my soul I do not. I am just as I have said. A strange fate has led me to this place. Perhaps the great Spirit of heaven himself has whispered the dreams that are more than half realized. You do not fear me?"

The youth spoke in a tender tone, and his whole countenance showed how deep was the feeling that moved him. The girl again looked up into his face, and this time her own countenance betrayed more of emotion than had before appeared there.

"No," she said at length; "I do not fear you, but tell me what this all means. Tell me," she added, with much agitation, "for there is something wondrous here—something which I cannot understand."

"I will tell you," said Paul, now perfectly assured that the fair being did not fear him. "For a long time I have had a desire to visit these ruins, and in connection therewith I have had many strange dreams—dreams which were thrilling and mystic. I have dreamed of a rare and lovely flower that I should find here—a water of life and a nectar that should give me eternal youth and peace—and beyond I have dreamed some things that are beyond my power to describe, but which yet have affected me deeply. At length I came here, and on the night last past, I slept in a close corner above where we now are. A man came to the ruins, and I concealed myself, but yet I could watch his movements. I saw him approach the great stone pedestal of Buddha, and witnessed his entrance to this place. I caught a glance of his rich dress, and from that I learned from the neighboring peasants, I knew that he must be the Prince Kong-ki. From that moment I made up my mind that I would explore this place if possible. It was not all curiosity that moved me; there was a deeper feeling, though I could not explain it if I should try. I watched, and saw that man go away, and this evening I came again. I concealed myself as before, and ere long I saw a man come out from the mysterious passage. When he came back he discovered me, and I made at me with a heavy club which he carried. I knew that he would take my life if he could, for so he assured me. I had not molested him, but I found that I must either die, or else kill

him. I drew a pistol and shot him. I did the deed with a better grace, for I believed he had killed many an unsuspecting traveler who had sought the shelter of these ruins. I had learned the secret of gaining entrance to the place, and I tried. The woman who came up did not notice but that it was the house who followed her."

"He was no house," said the girl.

"But he wore the dress."

"Yes, that was for effect. He was a eunuch, one of the prince's most trusted slaves."

"A eunuch?" repeated Paul, with a start.

"But you are not the wife of the prince?"

"No, no—I am no wife yet. Thank God I am yet a maiden—as pure as the mountain snow."

How Paul's heart leaped at those words! He clasped his hands, and a silent prayer of thanks came from his soul. Strange that he should have felt so.

"And Fank-king is dead?" murmured the maiden, bowing her head.

"Yes; but I could not help it. I trust you will not blame me?"

"No, no," quickly replied she; "for I have heard, even here, enough to satisfy me, that he has killed innocent men whom he has found there. It is dreadful!"

The maiden shuddered as she spoke, and while yet she was moved by the memory of the fatal truth, the silken arras at the extremity of the apartment was moved aside, and the same woman who had conducted Paul down from the pedestal entered. She had advanced half-way up the room when she noticed our hero. She stopped and clasped both hands to her eyes, and thus she remained for half a minute. Then she looked once more upon the youth, and as she did so a quick, sharp cry broke from her lips. Paul knew not what to do or say. He knew not what course would best serve his sweet companion. But he was not left long in suspense, for the maiden soon regained her presence of mind, and in a tone comparatively calm, she said:

"You seem surprised, Lan. This is a man who has come in place of Fank-king. Did you not notice that you were conducting a stranger to our place?"

"The great Tien-tan preserve me," uttered the woman, lifting both hands in astonishment. "Is it possible?"

"It certainly is," returned the maiden. And then with much earnestness she added: "But it is not strange that Fank-king should have said nothing to us about the matter?"

"Very strange," responded Lan, regarding Paul curiously. There was a dubious look upon her face, but she did not seem to really entertain any doubts. Perhaps she had not had time to frame any positive thoughts about the matter.

"I will show him Fank-king's apartment," resumed the maiden, without showing the least signs of discomposure. "I want nothing now."

The old woman seemed to hesitate. She was evidently not in a position to exercise control over the movements of the maiden without some unusual cause; but she certainly appeared to desire further light upon the present state of affairs. She started towards the arras, but she turned before she had reached it and looked back. She looked first upon the maiden, and then upon Paul, and from the nature of this last look it was evident that she had now begun to entertain some doubts. But she said nothing plainly, though her lips moved, and the sound of low mutterings came to the ears of our hero and his companion.

"She mistrusts us," said the fair girl, looking up into the youth's face.

Paul made no reply, for the words of his companion sounded strangely in his ears, and they rung strangely, too, upon his heart. "She mistrusts us!" It was a strange sentence. And then the manner in which she had behaved in the presence of the old woman was also strange. Paul's heart fluttered wildly as he thought over the events of the past ten hours, and an atmosphere of mystic power seemed to be moving about him and entrailing his senses.

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Near one of the great canals stood the palace of the prince Kong-ki. He was a powerful man in Nankin, and so he was powerful in the whole of his province. He was looked up to as a patron of sobriety and virtue, and towards those who were guilty of low debauchery and lust he was most severe and rigorous. Sometimes when people wished to use a strong term to express the superlative of constancy and virtue, the Prince Kong-ki was brought up as an example. It was most fortunate for him that his people had discovered these things.

It was late in the evening—the very evening that Paul Arden had gone for the second time to the ruined temple—and in one of the sumptuously furnished apartments of the prince's palace, sat a middle-aged woman. She was still beautiful, but there were traces of deep sorrow upon her brow, and her eyes gave signs of much weeping. She was Niao, the wife of the prince. Well was it for the prince that Niao never went abroad, for people would then have seen her tears, and they might have wondered how the wife of such a husband could find occasion to weep. But the people did not see all this, and many a noble dame envied the fair Niao the possession of the virtuous prince of a husband.

Niao sat upon a soft couch, and near her stood a maid who watched her with much interest. The princess was looking upon the great rose that formed part of the figure of the carpet, and ever and anon a bright tear would fall from her long lashes upon the very rose that fastened her gaze. She was pale now, and her bosom was heaved with some powerful emotion.

"Tai," she said, looking up at her attendant, "has my lord returned yet?"

"Not yet," replied the maid, moving nearer to her mistress. "I have hearkened for the music of his horse's hoofs upon the court, but the sound has not yet come."

There was a silence of some minutes, broken only by the deep sighs of the princess. At length she spoke again:

"Tai," she said, in a tone of strange sound, "do you think I am grown very ugly?"

"Ugly!" repeated the maid, holding up her hands in amazement. "Are you not still the most beautiful woman in Nankin? Do not all acknowledge you to be the very flower of—"

"Stop, stop, good Tai," interrupted the princess, with a faint smile. "There is no need that you should flatter me. I know that I was once called beautiful, and hence Kong-ki loved me; but all things of earth must fade, and I know that I am not exempt from the great law. I was young then, but years have rolled upon my face, and I know they have left their mark on my face. Perhaps Kong-ki sees that the bloom of the flower has gone, and I am less pleasing to him."

"Does he see your heart?" asked the maid, moving still nearer to the princess. "Ah, he would find the bloom more than made up there."

"Alas, good Tai, I fear he would find the bloom all gone from there, too. Mine is a sad heart. I know that my beauty is fading, and that my lord no longer loves me. He is cold and harsh, and his words freeze me when he speaks. Alas! his love is not mine. He does not know how wondrously his heart clings to him."

The attendant had no consolation to offer, for she knew that her mistress spoke the truth. She had noticed the change in the manner of the prince, and she knew full well how sadly it worked upon the poor wife. She had been long with her mistress—she was with her when they were both young and joyous. She loved the good and gentle Niao with her whole heart, and she suffered when Niao was unhappy.

"Tai," continued the princess, after a few moments' pause, "you do not think Kong-ki would harm me?"

"Harm you? Heaven forbid! Does any man hold such a heart as that?"

"Alas! I sometimes fear him. O, you do not know how strangely he speaks to me. And then I have—"

"What is it?" asked Tai, bending affectionately over her mistress.

"I have heard him speak in his sleep!" the princess uttered, with a fearful shudder.

"But he may only have dreamed."

"Ah, people do not speak so plainly save where the heart has a feeling. He may have dreamed, but there must have been solid foundation for such dreams. O, my husband!"

While yet Tai was pondering upon what she had heard, the sound of tramping hoofs came up from the court. The princess started up and gazed into her companion's face.

"I think that is my lord," she said, in a low, earnest whisper.

"Yes," returned Tai. "It is the tread of his horse, and Li is certainly with him. Courage, my lady. Things may not be so bad as you fear. Smile upon the prince, and his heart must soften. I do not think he is all stone."

The wife looked up with a melancholy ex-

CHAPTER VII.

NIAO.

LET us change the scene now to Nankin. Nankin—once the proudest city in the great empire—the home of wealth, power and learning—the great capital where the Child of the Sun held his magnificent court, and where the princes of the realm made manifest their wealth. But Nankin has greatly changed now. The emperor is not there—the wise men speak not in her streets, and her court is but secondary to the great court of the North. Yet Nankin is still a great city—great in wealth—great in space—great in case—great in poverty, and great in ignorance and debauchery.

pression, but she made no reply, and ere long she arose from her seat and went to sit by the open window. The faithful maid said that her mistress was busy with her own thoughts, and she remained silent. Thus passed nearly an hour, and at the end of that time a female messenger entered the room. She approached the princess and informed her that her husband would see her.

"He may smile upon you now," said Tsai, after the messenger had withdrawn. "Try and see if he does not still love you."

"I shall do all I can,"

Tsai left the apartment, and shortly afterwards the prince entered. He was a stout, corpulent man, somewhere in the neighborhood of forty years of age, and though he was not uncouth to look upon, yet there was a lurking spirit in his eyes, and an expression upon his thick lips, that would serve to awaken distrust in the mind of an unprejudiced observer. His dress was rich and costly, but somewhat tattered, and dusty. The princess arose as he entered, and saluted him with a low bow, and after this the prince bade her be seated.

"And now how fares my Niao?" he asked, as he took a seat by her side.

"I am well," returned the wife.

"But you do not look well, nor do you speak as though you were at ease. I think I shall send for the physician."

"No, no, my lord. Let me still have your love, and I ask no more. In your smiles I could find the best medicine. I am not sick, though your absence sometimes makes me sad."

A frown gathered upon the brow of the prince, and he turned away to hide it.

"You are foolish," he said, "to be sad because business calls me away."

"Business!" repeated Niao, in a careful, pleading tone. "And is it all business that takes you from me? Is it business that makes you cold and stern? Is it business that has frozen up the current of your love?"

Kong-i started, and an angry flush passed over his features. He gazed into the face of his wife, and for a while he seemed to be endeavoring to read her thoughts—as though he would have found out if her fears were based upon any positive knowledge. But he could read nothing there save the record of hopes that were not realized, and the sadness of a desponding heart.

"You accuse me strangely," he said, "with a sort of offended tone, but which was yet too cold for such real feeling."

"I was not aware that my love had grown cold," he still it has become an old affair, and the warm impulses of youth are wearing off. Did you think they were going to last for a life-time?"

"If true love is an impulse, then I see not why it would become dim with age. Ah, my husband, in my heart there is no such thing as the growing old of love. It is a lasting principle, and belongs to the soul, as eternal as the heavens, and knows nothing of time or age. The love I once felt for you only gains strength upon the shoulder of time."

The prince bit his lip and turned away his head. There was a power in the language of the princess that he could not wholly overcome, and yet he showed by his very manner that he did not like it. He remembered the time when he had loved her fondly and strongly, but it had been with the passions of impulsive youth, and now that age crept upon him the avenges of that love were closing up. At length, however, he drove away the emotions that had moved him, and in an abrupt tone he said:

"We will not speak of this now. At some other time I may be happy to receive a lesson on love, since you have seemed up so faithfully. But I have come now to attend to another matter. I am confident you are not well, and I feel sure that a change of place would suit you. You know I own a place some few leagues north of here. It is a lovely spot, and I have thought you would be more contented there."

"Give me your love and I shall be contented anywhere," returned Niao. "Of course you will sometimes keep me company, and so faithfully."

"Certainly. Very often." And as the prince spoke there was a spark in his eye which the wife did not see. "I shall be with you much," he continued, "and I think you will soon forget the troubles you have experienced here. As soon as you can prepare, I will accompany you thither."

"It will take me but a short time to do that. By the day after to-morrow I can be ready. I suppose I am only to pass this summer there," she said, inquiringly.

"That is all."

As soon as this matter was arranged the spirits of the prince seemed to rise, for he talked some time, and his conversation was light and gay, though once in a while, when he found the eyes of his wife resting upon him with their light of joyous love, he would hesitate and tremble, and a slight change might have been seen in the color of the trembling lip. But his wife noticed it not—she fondly hoped that his love was yet here, and she was blind to all else. Hers was not the boom of quick suspicions, and a few kind words could perform almost wonders upon her feelings.

When her husband at length left her she felt happier than before.

"O good Tsai, I think he loves me yet," murmured the princess, after her maid had joined her again. "He spoke kindly to me, and he smiled."

"And so he hastened to your side with his love?"

"Yes," returned Niao, with some hesitation. "But he did not at first show his love. He has bade me get ready to move to the country place which he owns out towards Kin-chen, and my willingness to go has pleased him."

Tsai did not reply immediately, for she seemed to have found something about which to think. She was a keen, quick-witted girl, and one not easily deceived. She could speak words of encouragement for her mistress, and she could be misanthropic, too, if there was occasion. She had been engaged in deep thought while the prince had been with her mistress, and perhaps that thought had amounted to something in her mind.

"Do you know, my lady, anything about this place to which you are going?" she at length asked, with considerable earnestness in her manner.

"Only that it is a very beautiful place," returned the princess.

"But I have heard that it is very sickly there. From the low marshes which surround it there comes up a foul malaria, especially at this season."

"Does my lord know of this?" asked Niao.

"Perhaps not," returned the maid, checking herself, and keeping back the fears she entertained. "Of course he would not send you there if he knew of it."

"Perhaps it is not so bad now," said the princess.

"Very likely," responded Tsai.

"But if it is yet dangerous we can come back here," added the princess.

"Certainly," assented Tsai, still deeply engaged in his thought.

"You will go with me, Tsai, for you, at least, love me."

"I shall go where you go, my lady."

This was spoken with unusual resolution, and shortly afterwards the faithful maid was dismissed.

She appeared to have something upon her mind which she wished to speak, but she kept it to herself. She gave her mistress a long, earnest look, and then with a slight, and shake of the head she moved away from the place.

After she was gone the princess started up and leaned once more against the window. The evening breeze came in sweet and cool, and fanned her feverish brow, but still there was a burning sensation coming up from her heart.

She had noticed the look of her handmaid, and forebodings of ill were working in her mind. She tried to think that her husband loved her truly, and that he would not harm her—though it was no extraneous harm that she feared. If she could only have the love of her earthly lord, she cared for nothing else; but if that was gone, then every other thing was but as a blank to her soul.

CHAPTER VIII. THE HEART'S PLEDGE.

Wu left Paul Arden and his new-found acquaintance regarding each other in silence, but the youth soon found his tongue, and his first desire was to find out why his fair companion was in so strange a place, and how she came there, and he asked her if she had any objections to telling him the story.

"No," she replied, without hesitation. "The story of my life is a very simple one, and I will tell it with pleasure."

"It would surely please me," resumed Paul, moving nearer to her side.

"Then you shall be pleased," she commenced with a smile. "My name is Yu-li. Of my parents, I can only remember that they lived in the city of Kin-chen when I was very young when they died. After they were dead I went to live with my uncle, and he took me to the village that lies upon the great river near Nankin. There I lived with him until I was seventeen years old, and at that time the Prince of Nankin, Kong-i, stopped there and saw me."

I heard him talk with my uncle, and I knew that they were talking of me. After that the prince used to come to our house every month, and sometimes often, and frequently he would talk with me. I felt proud to be noticed by so noble a grandee, and I used to do all in my power to please him, little dreaming then what was to be the end. In this way a year passed, and I was eighteen. One day my uncle came to me and told me that for the future the prince was going to take me under his charge. I was pleased with that, for I thought then that I should enjoy all sorts of privileges, and have the station of a lady."

"When the prince came to take me away it was late in the evening. I thought it strange, but I did not think there was anything to fear. I did not entertain any doubts until I found that he did not intend to stop at Nankin. We only waited near the walls of the city until we were joined by Fung-king, and then we moved on again. At daylight we entered a small village, and there we stopped through the day, neither of us showing ourselves out of doors. I asked the prince what it all meant, but he only told me not to be alarmed—that he was going to find me a home where I should be very happy. As soon as it was dark again we set forward, riding very fast through the night, and before daylight we reached these ruins. I was conducted down to this place, and here the prince told me that he had had it furnished up for me. Then it was that I learned his meaning. He meant to make me his wife as soon as I was twenty years of age, and until that time he meant that I should remain here and study of Fung-king who would instruct me in all that a lady of high station ought to know."

"I was then he told me this, for I did not wish to become his wife. He was growing old, and I knew that I could never love him. He tried to soothe me—he told me how happy he would make me, and how I should have everything that I could wish for my comfort. But when I thought that I was to be shut up here for two years my heart almost broke. The prince said he did not dare to trust so fair a flower to exposure, for he feared he might lose it. He found that I would not be comforted, and when it was daylight he hastened away. The woman whom you have seen was here, and she tried to make me feel easy in my new position, but it was of no use. For long, long days I wept and sobbed, and it seemed as though I was imprisoned forever."

"At the end of a month the prince came again. I had grown calm, then, and he was very kind to me, but I was not happy. So time passed on, and every month, and once in a while, often, he came to see me. He generally spoke but one night, but sometimes more. He conversed with me, and seemed pleased that I had learned so much, for the prince was a learned man for all his hardness of heart. Gradually the sharper stings of my grief wore off—my sadness became

a calm, dim melancholy, and I have now even become so habituated to the place, that I can trust the prince with something like regard. I fear him, for I know that his power is great; but I have never repented that I have chosen to have a virtuous wife. I think he loves me."

As Yu-li ceased speaking, she raised her hand to her brow and sighed heavily. Paul was much affected by what he had heard.

"And did you never have the wish to escape from this place?" he asked, trembling while he spoke.

"O yes, many times. But the opportunity never offered itself. I have been watched most narrowly, for when Fung-king slept Lan was always awake, and when she slept the eunuch was on the watch."

"But have you yet learned to love the prince?"

"To love him?" repeated the maiden, starting with sudden energy. "O, he seems an evil spirit in my path. He is to me what the great King of Darkness is to the souls of the lost. I fear him."

"I see now why he should have placed you in such a place as this," said the youth, speaking as though he were keeping back the emotions that were most stirring for utterance.

"He said he did it for fear that he might lose me if I were where others could see me."

"And do you think he had this place vacated on purpose for your reception?"

"No. I have heard, from the conversation of Lan and the eunuch, that a poor peasant discovered the secret of this place, and communicated it to the prince. The peasant has never since been seen. I perhaps the prince liked not to trust him living with the secret. This must have been some retreat of the Buddhist monks, and perhaps was prepared for the purpose of furthering some designs upon the superstitions of the people. The prince only had the apartments furnished, and after they were done the four men who had done the work were killed here, and their bodies sunk in the mud of the river! I have learned these things by listening to my keepers when they thought I slept."

"Love the prince! O, O!"

"I think the prince of Nankin has a wife!" whispered Paul, laying one hand upon Yu-li's arm. His hand trembled when he placed it there, and his voice was tremulous with the most powerful emotion.

"Alas!" murmured the maiden, with a fearful shudder. "I know he has. Lan told me that she was sickly, and could not live long. O, God forbid that she should!"

"What?" whispered Paul, drawing still nearer to the hesitating girl.

"'Tis too dreadful to think upon; but his hands are already stained with blood, and I know not what he may do. In one month I shall be twenty years of age, and then he says I shall be his wife. Heaven knows how my present wife is to die!"

Yu-li spoke with a heart-breaking expression, and her head sank forward upon her hands. For some moments Paul did not dare to speak. He gazed upon the fair cheek that was turned towards him, and he saw that there was a tear upon it. At that moment his heart burst the last bond that held it to the flesh, and he felt bright and strong. He knew that he loved the beautiful being—that every emotion of his soul centered upon her. The love may have been born suddenly, and its life may have come quickly, but his soul was strangely prepared for it. The dim visions of the past were but realized—the trembling hopes of the dreamer had found their fruition. There was a soul impulse and animation, and he gave himself now to the ready prisoner to the gentle god that had been shooting his darts upon him.

"Yu-li," he said, "you may call me Paul—Paul Arden."

"Paul?" she repeated, speaking the name very correctly, and at the same time raising her eyes with an expression which showed that she had long been waiting for the name.

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me, and we will flee from this place. The power of the wicked prince shall be over you no more, for I will take you to a home where you dare not come save as a cringing suppliant. Will you not go with me?"

The maiden gazed first up into the face of her companion, and then she bent her eyes to the floor. She did not tremble, but her cheek turned pale, and her heart seemed almost to have ceased to beat. For full two minutes she remained thus, and then she once more turned her gaze upon the face of the youth.

"Paul," she said, speaking very strongly, and resting one of her small white hands upon his arm. "I do not know your full meaning."

"Can you not read it in my face?" quickly returned the other, looking a look of love that could not be mistaken. "Yu-li, until now my heart has been my own, but it is no longer so. I love you, and with my love I would protect you. I would find some home where you should rest in peace with your smiles, and where my wealth should make me blessed only so far as it helped to make you happy. I would make you my wife—to you I would give all my love, and I would only feel happy when you could share the feeling. Speak to me, and tell me if you understand me now."

"I think I understand you," the maiden whispered, beginning to tremble.

"And what further can you answer me?" asked Paul, drawing Yu-li's head upon his bosom. "O, I hope you do not fear me—I hope you will not wonder if my words are true. Only look to your own heart, and if you find there an answering emotion to the words I have spoken, then let me know it, for heaven itself is not more true than the heart I offer you. Will you not go?"

"If you can open the way, I will flee from here, and then—"

"Speak on. Let me know all, for I will take you from here even though I have to break my heart in separating from you afterwards. Do not hesitate."

"I will flee from here," repeated Yu-li, hiding her face in the young man's bosom, "and then we may learn more of each other. We will flee far from here—we shall be together sometime. Then you will know more of me, and then—I will answer you further."

Paul raised the fair girl's head and gazed into her face, and he found her weeping. He pressed his lips upon her pure white brow and kissed her, and then he said:

"I will ask you no more, though I am sure that years of acquaintance can only strengthen the sentiments I already feel. If I have read your face wrongly, then I will never attempt to read a face again. But I will wait, for in time you may know me better, and be the more sure of my faith; but I hope you will learn to love me."

"You teach me well, and I fear I am learning faster than become acquainted upon a first acquaintance; but we will wait."

Paul knew very well that the fair maiden's heart was turning with love towards him, and the knowledge made him most happy. He strained her to his bosom, and she did not shrink from him. He kissed her, and she only blushed. He whispered to her again of his love, and her eyes beamed with a joyous light. He told her again of the happy home he would make for her, and she wept in the fullness of joy.

But time was passing swiftly away, and the youth was long recalled to a sense of present realities. The transition was by no means a pleasing or grateful one, but stern necessity demanded it.

"Now when shall we go?" he asked.

"As soon as possible," returned Yu-li, drying her eyes, and setting her thoughts upon the subject thus broached. "Of course I must have a disguise."

"Yes. You would certainly be safer with one. But shall we have time? When will the prince come again?"

"O, not for a week, at least. I feel sure of that."

"Then I will go at once among the peasants of the neighborhood, and I think I will get you a boy's dress. I will come again in the evening, and then we will take our final leave for the time. I ought not to stay longer now, for it must soon be daylight. But while I am gone you must show nothing of your feelings to Lan. Give her no chance to mistrust your mind nor my real character. Let your fullest confidence rest in me, and remember me as one whose love is all your own."

"O," murmured Yu-li, laying her head once more upon the youth's bosom. "I shall not forget you, and I shall surely believe that you love me. How blessed am I in my trust, for love and liberty have come together. Paul, I shall not doubt you. O, I shall not let this first sweet emotion of my soul pass from me, so long as there is room for hope."

There were more words of love—more breathings of soul with soul—another pure kiss, and then Lan was summoned. She came in and gazed inquisitively upon the couple before her, but she could discover no traces of anything to move her suspicions, though she could see that Yu-li had been weeping.

"Good Lan," said Paul, speaking with calm confidence, "I must leave the place now, and you may conduct me out. I have business at Fung-thing-yo, but I shall return this evening. So if you will keep watch through the day, I will let you sleep to-night." And then turning to the maiden, he added:

"Yu-li, you must keep up a good heart, for in one short hour you will leave this place for the home of your prince, and perhaps you will be called away before. Ponder well upon what I have said, and do not forget that if you would secure your husband's love, you must let him see that you love him in return. Lead on, Lan."

The woman took her candle and led the way up to the interior of the pedestal, and here Paul stopped her.

"You will be very careful of the maiden," he said, "for the prince has such fear that her heart is not all his. Watch her narrowly, and see that she does not escape."

The woman promised obedience, and then Paul watched to see how she opened the secret passage. He saw her seize a brass ring above the movable stone and give it a pull downward. As she did this, a click accompanied this movement, and then she took hold of a second ring, which was beneath the first, and having given it a pull outwards, the stone slowly settled from its place.

When the youth once more stood alone among the ruins, he found that the first dim streaks of coming day were already in the east. He sank down upon a block of stone near the feet of the great Joss, for he was overcome by the emotions that had found place in his soul. His love for the fair being he had just left was as strong as the pure affection of ages, and its roots were as deep in his heart; but it was the strangeness of the affair that worked most upon his nerves—the almost marvellous adventure he had experienced, and the sudden weakening of his whole being to a new work of faith and love. He sat there till his heart beat more quietly, and then he prayed for the safety and peace of the gentle maiden who had become as the very apple of his eye. He then went down to the river and bathed, and when the daylight had fairly come, he turned his steps towards the peasants' cot upon the hill, where he hoped to procure the disguise he needed.

CHAPTER IX.

A JOURNEY TOWARDS A NEW HOME.

When Paul reached the cot of Lin-fu he found the family up, and though he beat about with them, yet he managed to evade the questions of the old peasant so as not to excite suspicion, and yet to satisfy their curiosity. After the meal was finished, our hero measured with his own size of Lin's eldest boy, and he thought his dress would fit Yu-li well, and after he had taken his seat upon the bench outside to smoke with his host, he asked if the boy had another suit of clothes.

"One more suit," replied Lin—"a suit for the festivals, but he'll soon run away from it, for he knows he will have to wear a new suit of clothes that would grow, too. You see my two children are girls, and it will be a long while before the little one can grow up to jump into his brother's garb. But we manage to wear them out."

"So I suppose. But now I happen to want a suit of boy's clothes, and I think your son's will be just the thing. I will take them of you, and pay you enough to buy new ones."

The peasant was so pleased with the offer that he forgot to ask any questions, so Paul spared the necessity of deceiving him, and the conversation was soon changed to the subject of the ruined temples. At length Lin went in and fetched out the boy's clothes, and Paul found them much better than he had expected. The vest was of blue linen, and neatly trimmed about the skirt; the shirt was white and clean, and the trousers were a sort of light buff. There was also a cap and boots, and with these our hero was perfectly satisfied. He paid for them enough to purchase a new suit, taking care to throw in a little over; but before the business was wholly finished he was obliged to tell Lin that he might take a boy with him to Shanghai.

After this business was concluded the youth accepted an invitation made over the peasant's small patch of ground, and thus he passed the time until dinner was ready. He stopped to that meal, then smoked once more with Lin, and then, having tied up the clothes he had purchased, he took his way again towards the temples. His first impulse upon reaching the ruins was to seek the side of Yu-li at once, but upon second thoughts he concluded it would be better to wait until evening, for were he to go then, Lan might read the secret of his heart; so he concealed the bundle of clothes, and then walked away down the valley, following the little river towards the distant town. He saw much upon the flowery banks of the stream that would, at another time, have afforded him some satisfaction, but now his thoughts were elsewhere, and he was longing only for the flight of the last minutes.

But time passed as it always passes, and in due time the shades of night were drawn over the temples. With a thrilling hope, Paul concealed the clothes under his own garb, and then knocked at the pedestal. The answer soon came, and he gave the signal of the whistle, and in a moment more the way was opened. The youth stepped in, and having closed the way behind him he followed Lan down the steps. He found Yu-li looking pale and anxious, and as soon as Lan was gone he hastened forward and clasped the maiden to his bosom.

"You did not fear that I should remain away?" he said, as he imprinted a kiss upon her brow.

"No, I did not fear that," returned Yu-li; "but yet I have been anxious all day long, and have hardly slept for my thoughts of my hopes seemed too bright for realization. And then Lan has been bidding me to be sure and love the prince, or I should have cause to regret it. She has kept his picture before me all the time when I have been awake, and when I have slept I have dreamed of him, and it seemed to me that he would come instead of you."

"But you see you have need for fear no more, dear Yu-li. I am come, and have a disguise with me which I am sure will suit you. Let us wait until Lan is asleep, and then we will open the way to love and liberty. Smile upon me, Yu-li, and let me know that you are happy—let me know that your fears are gone."

Yu-li did look up and smile, and then she bowed her head upon her lover's bosom and burst into tears. It was a strange, wild happiness which she felt—a happiness such as never before found a home in her bosom, and which she could not analyze. She only knew that some new impulses had entered her soul—that old fears and repinings had gone, and that a burning, thrilling tide was rolling over her heart.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

STANZAS.

BY T. D. WILSON.

To yonder bright and beautiful,
O whither have ye fled?
That once above my wandering path
Your radiant light o'erspread,
To golden dreams by fancy brought,
To cheer each passing day;
When now your presence must be sought,
Where have ye fled away?

O, there was joy in former years,
When time flew gaily by,
And brought no heavy cloud of tears,
No grief, or long-drawn sigh,
But when the hours on silver wings
Flew lightly, softly on,
All kind with glad and happy things
That now, alas, are gone!

The flowers that at the morning bloomed
In lawns or fields,
And with their fragrant breath perfumed
The summer's balmy air;
Their beauty mingled in my dreams,
And charmed my restless eye;
Nor my believing heart had deemed
That they were doomed to die.

Ambition meets a glittering prize
In the bright sunbeams shine,
And offers love a sacrifice,
Upon its story shrine.
He goes where boundless waters are spread,
In fruitless desert lands;
O'er barren hills he bends his tread,
To grasp, at length—a shade!

Yale men! ye follow beauty's glaze,
Ambition's fleeting scheme;
Ye treasure vision's rainbow and fair,
And e'en believe our dreams.
We pluck the flowers at random cast,
Bright gems that Nature made;
But when their little life is past,
We wonder that they fade.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

PASQUINO'S BRIDE.

BY CHARLES H. WAITS.

CHAPTER I.

"Of all the fairest cities of the earth,
None are so fair as Florence." This
of present day, a treasure for a poet!

"My Violanta!" said the Count Garzia, to his daughter.

The lady thus addressed, turned her head, but appeared entirely absorbed in the contemplation of something in the distance.

"My daughter!" repeated the count, gently pulling a slight mantle upon her shoulders. The mantle fell, and the head turned, revealing the beautiful features of Violanta Garzia, destined to be the countess in her own right, and beautiful by the rare gift of heaven.

"Who just left me?"

"He appeared, by his conversation, to be a Venetian," returned Violanta, coloring still more deeply.

"His name?"

"I know it not," said the daughter, with some hesitation; "he addressed me as if an old acquaintance, and I supposed I might have forgotten him."

The Count Garzia ordered his carriage and attendants, and drove quickly from the splendid masquerade in the ducal gardens, to his own palace.

Violanta was an only child, and the pride of Venice. There was not a mark, nor a court bias, nor a fete of any description, in which she did not share the most radiant of all the noble ladies of that fair city. At an early age she had been deprived of her mother, and she was now left the only solace of a bereaved and nearly heart-broken parent. For Count Garzia had been fondly attached to his lady, who was one of the most lovely, as well as one of the most virtuous dames that had ever graced the nobility of Italy.

When Violanta came that night to receive her father's good-night kiss, he imprinted it silently and coldly upon her beautifully polished forehead, and holding her little soft hands, he gazed down into those moist, full eyes, as if he would read her soul in them.

"My darling!"

"My dearest father!"

"Be wary of masked strangers at court fets!" and dropping her hands, he stepped remorsefully into a balcony to indulge his reflections, without uttering another word.

Violanta had been an hour in her chamber. Garzia still leaned in meditation upon the stone railing of the balcony. Below him, flowed in silver windings, the Arno, and the moonbeams lay calmly upon its smooth bosom. Suddenly the notes of a guitar broke the stillness of the night, accompanied by a sweet, yet manly voice, singing a Venetian barcarole. It soothed the disordered spirits of the count, and he might have yielded to its influence and slept; but quickly a suspicion seized him, and taking a lamp, he went to his daughter's room. She lay nestled behind her damask curtains, with her soft, round arms folded across her bosom, her eyelids closed, and her face wearing an expression of innocent repose. The casement was open. He looked out. In the street below was the stranger of the masquerade. He closed the casement, extinguished the light, and departed, convinced that his daughter's heart was proof against incognito serenaders.

He should have been there a moment afterwards, when the comely slumberer jumped lightly from the silken couch, and encased a pair of little naked feet in velvet slippers,—when the casement flew up, and a soft hand was extended through it, and a softer voice murmured:

"Proceed, I am listening!"

Before he arose next morning, Garzia decided to quit his city residence, and set out immediately for his summer palace among the Apennines. "Then," thought he, "will my child be fresh and free from the temptations which necessarily surround her in this gay, heartless, dusty city." His equipage stood in

the court, the horses glittering with the silver and spangles of their harnesses, and the panels of the coach blazoned with half the arms of heraldry. He called, Violanta to him, and communicated to her his purpose.

"O, the glorious Apennines!" said she, joyously clapping her hands; and pulling down her father's face, she pressed her cheek to his.

"Prepare quickly!" said the count; "the carriage waits already!" And he went to give some orders to his steward during his absence; greatly astonished, and re-assured, by the alacrity with which his daughter entered into his plan. The palace was closed and barred, the postillions mounted, and the carriage was soon rumbling over the rocky roads in the direction of the Apennines.

And while upon their journey, gentle reader, let us give you a clearer insight into the character of the lovely Florentine. Violanta Garzia was a true daughter of Italy. She was all passion. Deprived at an early age of the parent who alone could mould her mind and heart in union with the softer impulses of her sex, she had grown up with all her faculties warmed and stimulated under the burning sun of the glorious clime in which she lived. She loved her father most tenderly; she was proud of his beauty, and honors, and often, as she leaned upon his shoulders, and throned with her slender fingers his dark curls, she had wondered if there were any affection which could supersede the love she bore him. Ah, Violanta! you were soon to find an answer to a question which has puzzled many a maiden before you. She had seen and conversed with the beautiful stranger, at the fete in the ducal gardens of the Boboli, and a sudden, deep, and ineffable passion had arisen in her bosom. Her soft, eloquent eyes had spoken more love during that brief interview, than could have been expressed in language in a day; and they had parted mutually aware of each other's preference.

Crack, crack, went the whips of the postillions, and the carriage rolled over the broken road, nearly jerking the servant in the dickey from his seat at every pull. The soft dew of an Italian May was spread over the grass, on which the morning sunbeams lay, glittering in silence. All nature without was smiling, and a beautiful specimen of its handiwork within the carriage lay joyously nestled within the embrace of her delighted parent.

Suddenly there was a "Who goes there!" Stop! the carriage was brought violently up, the postillions ceased cracking their whips, the man in the dickey ducked his head, and put out his hands supplicatingly, as a broad sabre flashed over him,—a dark curly head was put into the carriage window, and a voice came through the ivory mouthpiece of a mask, by no means unpleasant, or bandit-like, politely requesting the signore and signora to alight. The count searched for his pistols; his daughter clung tremblingly to his bosom.

"Step forth!" repeated the mask, opening the carriage door.

There was no alternative, so they descended from the vehicle, and found themselves before a personage who merits a slight description. He was a young man, tall, well-formed, and graceful as an Apollo. He was dressed with perfect elegance and taste. A jacket of crimson velvet, buttoned close up, and lined with bare of gold, and breeches embroidered, and adorned with rows of silver buttons at the sides, composed his dress. Into his belt, which was adorned with golden tassels at the left side, were stuck pistols and dirk, and upon his heels were spurs. A profusion of dark hair escaped in tangled curls from beneath his cap, and over his face was a passed mask, from the mouth of which protruded the little piece of ivory used in disguising the voice.

"Could signore tell me in which of his trunks his treasures lie? It would save the trouble of overhauling them all."

The count looked first at his pistols, then at the bandits around him, then at his pallid child, who hung quivering upon his arm, and then, then pointed out the precious booty. Jewels and plate vanished like magic, and the trunks were empty before any one could tell where the plunder was stowed.

"If the signora will dance with me a coranto upon the green, I will remit half the spoil!" said the robber, in his softest tone, and in the politest Italian.

Violanta blushed, and cast down the long, dark fingers of her eyes. She looked as if she more than half liked the idea of dancing with the handsome bandit; still she withheld her consent, until on casting her eyes up to the face of her father, she read approval in his looks.

The light clicking of castanets and the sounds of a guitar were heard, as some one touched the strings, and Violanta, with her robber partner, stepped out upon the green. Garzia mounted into his carriage to witness the scene at the distance.

"Begin!" and Violanta, pointed, for the first step, a foot that would have drawn a sigh from Praxiteles.

As they whirled in the dance, crack again, went a new position's whip; away galloped the Count Garzia's equipage, and it was lost among the defiles and forests of the Apennines. The last that was heard was the report of the count's pistol, as he endeavored to shoot, through his carriage windows, the rascally robber who was beating his horses.

The fairy feet stopped tripping; Violanta's eyes flashed indignantly, and throwing upon her partner a look of ineffable scorn, she disengaged herself from his arms.

"What! means this! Restore me to my father!"

The bandit removed his mask, and revealed a fair and beautiful face. Above a mouth almost feminine in its beauty of color and outline, was a slight moustache; the nose was Greek and classic, and in the dark, humid eyes there was an expression of melancholy, which would have been the compass of the executors of St. Agatha.

"Ah, why have you separated me from my father?" said Violanta, more softly, as she recognized the stranger of the masquerade. The

dark, sweeping lashes drooped in maiden shame over her eyes, and she looked irresistible.

"I will tell you," said the handsome cavalier; and unrestrained, he placed his arm round her, and led her to a bank of the greenest turf under a linden tree. His tale was a very delightful one, to judge by the mantling cheeks of the maiden at his side, but it was intolerably long, for he sat above an hour with the prettiest hand in Florence within his palms, which he repeatedly raised to his lips in passionate tenderness. It was a lovely tale; they would have done admirably as Juan and Haidée.

CHAPTER II.

"There is a glorious city in the sea.
That is the town of the narrow streets,
Shining and flowing; and the salt sea-wood
Clings to the marble of her palaces."

Like a floating city lies Venice, on the shores of the Adriatic. The dawning sun is reflected from a thousand minarets and domes, which rise mosque-like into the clear air. The glittering waters of her streets, laving the foundations of her palaces,—huge piles of more than oriental splendor, the residences of her merchant-princes,—and the merry calls of the early gondoliers echoing among the palace arches as they glide mysteriously to and fro, are the only sounds to disturb the morning silence.

The young sunbeams stream with difficulty through the richly-curtained windows into a luxuriously furnished chamber of a palace that borders upon the canal which flows under the Rialto. The walls are richly tapestried, and the floor is covered with several thicknesses of heavy Turkey carpets. Upon one side of the apartment is a couch, glowing with sumptuous hangings.

On the other side, a large mirror, and all around are niches, containing copies of the most perfect works of Grecian art, done exquisitely in marble, and colored by the gorgeous dye of the curtains and hangings. A young man, handsomely attired, stands gracefully studying a statuette of the Greek Antoninos, which rests in one of the crypts.

"Pasquino!" The count could have told, easily enough, the voice of Violanta, as it came from within the curtains of the couch, clear as a bell, yet soft as a flute.

"My dear son!"

"Why do you go away so early, and leave me alone all day?" A beautiful head and alabaster shoulders appeared from behind the hangings.

"It is not through want of fondness for you," and Pasquino went up to his wife and pressed her lovely cheek to his; there was sorrow in his large, melancholy eyes as he did it.

"Will you not stay with me to-day?" The voice and expression of the supplicant would have tempted St. Anthony, but Pasquino pressed his mouth to her rich young lips, murmuring:

"Would that I might! Adieu, my darling!" and leaving the apartment, he proceeded down the staircase to the palace-entrance, where his groom awaited him. Stepping lightly aboard, the vessel shot swiftly into the canal, and under the Rialto,—the steel bark flashing in the sunshine, and the water glancing on the oar blades. It would be fruitless to attempt to describe the labyrinth of streets which the gondolier threaded.

He ultimately entered a low-arched passage, and after rowing with a vehemence that made every seat in the gondola quiver, his steel prow struck fire on a granite step, and Pasquino stepped lightly out. Ascending a flight of steps, he passed through a maze of galleries, and on arriving at a low, mean looking door, unlocked it and entered. All around were scattered the implements of a student of Canova's art. On a table, at one side of the room, were a mallet, and chisels, and a most exquisite model in plaster of Psyche; near by was the unfinished statue itself. About the room were scattered various other statues and busts, and in an obscure corner was a low bed with white curtains, at the head of which hung suspended a crucifix. Pasquino doffed his richly embroidered coat, and putting on a little white leather apron, proceeded assiduously to mould the voluptuous beauty of his Psyche.

And so, the stranger of the masquerade, the serenader, the gallant bandit, the beautiful Pasquino, enriched with the love of the superb Violanta, was nothing but a sculptor!

"Good evening, my Pasquino!" murmured two sweet lips, as his gondola grazed against the marble steps of his palace. A soft arm was laid on his neck, and Violanta never looked more trusting, confiding, and innocent. But in the depths of her Italian heart she had conceived a plan for ascertaining what it was that occupied him all day, and kept him from her arms.

Two minutes after Pasquino's bark had swept under the Rialto on the next morning, another gondola glided out of the palace entrance, and into the broad canal, silently and mysteriously dogging its course. Its sole occupants were a lady closely veiled, who sat upon the low cushion, and a ruddy gondolier with his throat and bosom bare, who rowed his noiseless boat with exquisite skill round difficult corners, and under black bridge-arches. Silently he rowed through the city of secrets and mystery, and as the gondola clicked its steel against the stair at which Pasquino was wont alight, and from which his bark had just turned, Violanta jumped out, and tripped nimbly up in pursuit of her sculptor-husband. She followed him with a foot as light as that of the fairy Fencella,—saw him upon the humble portal, gave a heave of a *scandalo* for telling her it was an artist's studio, and returned to her carriage, and his unwonted sternness upon her polished brow.

When Pasquino returned that evening, Violanta proposed that they should row out into the lagoon. He joyfully complied. The gondoliers dipped their oars; with a few strokes they cleared the mazy alleys and canals of Venice, and the blue waters of the Adriatic rippled against the gondola's prow. A thin glow floated around them, but the moon shone clear and bright from a cloudless sky.

"Pasquino mio!" said Violanta, suddenly, "you have never told me who you are. I have

asked you an hundred times, but you have always stopped my questions with kisses."

"I am the husband of a bride who would set half the men in Venice crazy."

There was a look of the most raptured on her lap, and her jewelled fingers played with his beautiful dark curls.

"Are you fond of art?"

Pasquino raised his head, and gazed with strange earnestness upon his bride. A half scornful smile played around the mouth of the fair Florentine, and her eyes flashed as she repeated the question.

"Before I saw you, it was the only mistress that I worshipped," said Pasquino.

"Perhaps you were a sculptor," she said.

"Tantum me not!" said he, sitting proudly erect, and folding his arms across his bosom; "but listen! A month since, in my quiet studio, I was pursuing that calling for which Heaven has inspired me, with a holy and noble passion. In an evil hour I learned that a rich man had died in Florence, bequeathing me an immense fortune. I dropped my chisel, and went to possess myself of my Florentine wealth. The night I arrived in the city there was a masque at Duke Leopold's palace. I disguised myself, and mingled with the glittering throng of maskers. I saw you, and,—but there is no necessity for repeating that part of the tale. I played the brigand, and stole you from your father's bosom. I bought the palace near the Rialto, placed you in it as its mistress, and my bride. And for three weeks I enjoyed unalloyed bliss; for O, how I loved you, Violanta! A week ago the bubble burst. A nearer heir to my uncle's property was found,—a son who was supposed to have been dead. He stripped me of my suddenly acquired wealth,—at the same time, however, generously giving me a considerable present, and offering me a large sum for a statue of Psyche, upon which I am now engaged, and which has been the cause of my long absence. With these I hoped to maintain you, in the state due to your rank; but the dream has passed!"

He choked down his emotions, and a look of sternness sat on his beaming features, which were pale and unmoved as marble.

A soft, white arm encircled his neck, a sweet check was pressed to his cold face, and a sweet voice warbled: "You have a noble soul, my Pasquino, and I am your bride."

He laid his hand upon the masses of her raven hair, and gazing into a face beaming with the purity and love of the virgin, renewed his vows to cherish and protect her, with a fervor and eloquence prompted by his excited and fiery spirits.

Lightly the gondoliers dipped their oars, and silently swam the little vessel upon the crystal bosom of the peaceful Adriatic. Suddenly, a light skiff, bound into the lagoon, came ploughing through the water, and not seen enough through the darkening mist to be avoided, rushed crashing into the gondola's bows. Violanta shrieked, but Pasquino seized her in his arms, and stepping lightly upon the gunwale of his sinking boat, with a single bound stood safe upon the deck of the other vessel, whose course had been so unexpectedly checked. As his feet touched the planks, he found himself confronting face to face Count Garzia! The count looked strangely for a moment, into his fair, handsome face, whose color was now heightened to a deep crimson, and his rapid, but suddenly recognizing his daughter, he shot his blade into its sheath again, and drew her to his heart in a long and sweet embrace.

"I am his bride! He is your son! Embrace him!" said Violanta, her dark, moist eyes beaming with joy.

The count hesitated for a moment, and then, outstretching his arms, Pasquino fell on his neck.

"Thus do I welcome you to my bosom, and to my family. You look noble; at least, you are the husband of my noble girl, and as such, merit my affection, and you shall wear the honors of my house!"

They returned to Venice. The happy Florentine sat between her husband and father as they glided calmly over the moonlit waters, her sparkling features glowing with bluster of pleasure, and her eyes lit up with a delight she had scarcely expected to realize, in the hours of her sunniest enthusiasm.

In a week the palace near the Rialto was abandoned for the count's *maison de plaisance*, among the Apennines. There,—amid the perfumes exhaled from cactuses and rare exotics, and the cool shade of gardens, adorned with statues from the chisel of Donatello, with fountains tinkling musically in their ears, as they played in their marble basins, and little rivulets murmuring sweetly as they glided through artificial channels,—Pasquino and his bride passed their happy honeymoon.

STOPPING THE EARS.

An amusing instance of Hibernian simplicity is afforded by the following little story told by a friend, in whose words we give it: Molly, our housemaid, is a model one, who handles the broomstick like a sceptre, and who has an abundance of sympathy for her master's property that amounts to a passion. She is a bustling, busy, rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed, blundering Hibernian, who serves around our good selves, makes war upon our papers, and goes about thirsting for new worlds to conquer, in the shape of undusted and unrighted corners. One day she entered our library in a confused manner, quite different from her usual bustling way. She stood at the door with a letter between her fingers, and her head bowed, as if she held, at arm's length, as if she had a gunpowder plot in her grasp. In answer to our inquiries as to her business she replied:

"Hase yer honor, I'm a poor girl, and han't much larin'; and ye sees, please yer honor, Paddy O'Reilly, and the better than him does not breed in our family, he's been writin' me a letter—a love letter, please yer honor; an'—an'—"

We guessed at her embarrassment, and offered to relieve it, by reading the letter. Still she hesitated, while she twisted a bit of raw cotton in her fingers.

"Shure," she resumed, "an' that's just what I want, but it isn't a gentleman like myself that would be likin' to know of the secrets between us, and so (here she twisted the cotton quite nervously) if it is only please yer honor, while reading it, so that ye may not hear it yerself, if ye'll just put this bit of cotton in yer ears an' stop yer ears, an' then the secrets will be unbeknownst to yer!"—N. O. P. C. P. C. P. C. P. C.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THERE'S MUSIC.

BY MARIA JOHNSON.

There's music still around me,
Soft floating through my ear,
In every breath that fans the air,
In every round I meet,
There's music in the tempest,
That sweeps the earth and sea;
And music in the summer sky
When not a cloud is free.

Above, below, o'er all around,
Sweet music ever flows;
And garden, grove and wood around
With nature's joyful noise.
The heart of man alone can make
Discordant, nature's voice;
The heart of man alone can wake,
Forever to repose.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

PHRENOLOGY IN NEW ENGLAND.

Phrenology is now so firmly established and favorably regarded, that there is no more need of arguing its truth than of arguing that the world is round. The disbelievers in phrenology are just about as numerous and as influential as those who adhere to the notion that the world is a vast plain, and the place they live in is exactly in its centre. Argument would be wasted in trying to uphold either the mental philosophy of Gall, or the astronomical philosophy of Copernicus. If the mass of facts which has been before the public, and upon which no intelligent person can shut his eyes, fails to secure an assent to those systems, the dissenters must be left to the "cold comfort" of incredulity.

It was in 1832, we believe, that Doctor Spurzheim came to America, and after lecturing on phrenology in various places for a few months, died very suddenly in this city. His eloquence, scholarship, and association with Doctor Gall, kindled much interest in the science, but by the multitude he was looked upon as a "humbug," and by certain college professors was stigmatized as a "foreign mountebank." In 1838 J. George Combe, of Edinburgh, visited us, and lectured on phrenology in most of the large cities and towns throughout the Union. He met with less success than even his "illustrious predecessor;" mainly, we think, because he refused to examine heads, and therefore did not give those practical proofs of the science which the American mind must and will have before embracing a new thing.

A very different method was adopted by Messrs. O. S. & L. N. Fowler, who began their career as phrenological lecturers and examiners a short time before Doctor Spurzheim's arrival. Their faith in the science was so strong that they were willing to undergo the most novel and severe practical tests. Examining heads blindfold, selling the occupation of strangers from their developments, and reading character from skulls, busts and portraits. So many were their "good hits," and so few their mistakes under these searching tests, that in a comparatively short period they triumphed over the dullness of ignorance on the one hand, and the conceit of learning on the other. Their philosophy, which the former builders of educational seminaries rejected, has become the chief corner-stone in several new and thriving colleges at the West; and the twin science of physiology, which the Messrs. Fowler have been not less active in disseminating by lectures and books, is studied in common schools everywhere.

About ten years ago, the Brothers Fowler formed a partnership with S. H. Wells, of New York, for the purpose of opening in that city a phrenological cabinet and publishing-house. The enterprise succeeded most wonderfully, especially in the sale of works bearing on physical and intellectual improvement. A great need being felt in New England of a branch establishment, one was opened at 142 Washington street, Boston, in the autumn of 1852. It was placed in charge of Mr. D. P. Butler, as phrenological examiner, teacher, etc., and of Mr. C. J. Hambleton, as book-keeper, business man, etc. These gentlemen have since been admitted as partners with F. & W., and the firm is styled "Fowlers, Wells & Co." Mr. Butler was selected by the Fowlers many years ago as having exactly the right organization for a practical phrenologist; and his remarkable accuracy and readiness in delineating character from the living subject, prove both the keenness of insight of those rare marksmen, and his own diligence of study and aim. He received all the instruction they could give, and has himself made a number of interesting discoveries in this grand science. But his chief business is, and probably ever will be, that of a practical adviser. By his sagacious aid, hundreds of young men choose their employment, merchants select their clerks, mechanics their workmen and apprentices, housekeepers their domestics, and happy marriages are contracted. So clear and life-like are Mr. Butler's delineations, that we do not wonder at the fact of his examining 2000 persons a year, and preparing written descriptions of nearly 2000 of them.

New England and the Canadas are supplied from this establishment with the *Water-Cure and Phrenological Journals*, and the illustrated *Hypnotic Quarterly Review*, and likewise with about one hundred different books bearing on physical, intellectual, social, moral and religious reform. The demand for these books is very great, and is constantly increasing, at wholesale and retail, prices being the same as at the New York office. Sometimes orders to the amount of one hundred dollars are received in a day.

Phrenological science is illustrated and "made easy" to students, by a cabinet of fifty skulls, two hundred casts (mostly from life), and one hundred paintings. These skulls, casts and paintings show every grade of human development, and include such names as Oberlin, Franklin, Washington, and J. Q. Adams, contrasted with such ones as Nero, Aaron Burr, Gilles, the pirate, and Doctor Dodd the forger.

In order to deserve a true friend, we must learn first to be one.—Holland.

MATURIN M. BALLOU, EDITOR.

ARTICLES DECLINED.

"Lines to Kate," "Hear! Hear!" "The Smoking
 Hatch," "A Ballad," "Flowers," "Weep not," "Des-
 air," "Come to my Grave," "Lines for an Album,"
 June, "Prayer," "Home," "The Spirit Lesson."

APPROPRIATE NAME.—There is in Baltimore a ram-shop called "Bleak House."

THE WAR.—The last dates from the seat of war represent the Russians as experiencing disastrous defeats in all their operations.

MILITARY.—The best saddle for the cavalry is a saddle of mutton.

\$10,000, was informed the day following by one of those "odious tax-men," that he was worth \$12,500.

At Fremont, Cal., Mrs. Benjamin F. West, of Salem, Mass., 38.

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The Flag of our Union.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

BEAUTY.

BY C. W. WILSON.

It spreads in the calm fields of blue,
And dreams in the shimmering dew;
It glows in the bright shining dew,
And blooms on the flower's dew.

In brilliant array,
It peeps with the day,
Expands, and declines with its light,
Then turning, mends with night.

It falls with the falling star,
And gleams in the glittering air;
It mingles in the twinkling dew,
That mantles the flower's dew.

It is on the wing
Of every spring,
It flutters with summer air,
And dreams the autumn away.

It floats on the summer breeze
That wafts the leaves to the trees;
It floats in the trembling moon,
Keeps by the silver moon.

On mountain and sea,
And woodland and lea,
It floats with dewdrops' light,
And flashes with morning's light.

It dwells with nature and art,
And circles with planets' part;
It holds in the pastures its part,
And nothing that ever found,

In valley or grove,
But shows the evening glow,
Its presence, or marks of its light.

But, still, no beauty of earth,
Repels the wandering eye,
For sight of heavenly light,
In woodland, or flower's dew.

No matter how fair,
Can ever compare
With the sparkling beauty we find
Nurtured in the sun of the mind.

[Translated from the French for The Flag of our Union.]

The Ferryman of La Vilaine.

BY ANNE T. WILDER.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRAVELLERS who now pursue the route from Nantes to Yannes, cross the bridge of La Roche Bernard, whose gigantic cables suspended above the mouth of La Vilaine, connect the two shores, and seek, by long arches a route of approach at the very foot of the hills; but many of those who pause to contemplate this marvel of contemporary industry, are ignorant of this passage, in which is found at present but a motive for admiration, was a few years since, an occasion of delay and sometimes of serious peril.

The only communication then between the inferior Loire and Le Morbihan was a ferry. Now the violence of the current, the breadth of the river at this point, the rapid action of the tide, which made it at certain hours a genuine arm of the sea, often rendered the crossing difficult. There, as at the passage of the hundred maritime rivers which water our occidental shores, the barges, overloaded by the farmers who were bringing their flocks from the fairs, or by women returning from pilgrimages, had more than once upset, bequeathing to the village story-tellers and poets perpetual legends for tales and elegies. Added to these the crimes committed on these thoroughfares, the romantic love adventures, the miraculous interviews with saints, fairies or demons, and it will be understood how the history of the ferryman formed one of the most dramatic chapters of that great poem eternally embellished by the popular imagination.

To speak the truth, there was something singular about the existence of these men. Their boats, a species of bridges which walked the water, had become their dwellings. On ordinary days, they often awaited for several hours the summons of some isolated foot-passenger, who would enter the boat without sitting down, throw them his fare, and continue his route. For them, every face was transient, all conversation but the exchange of a few words; their lives were composed only of fugitive apparitions and short episodes. Compelled thus to seize everything hastily, and enjoying the long leisure hours which invite meditation, the ferryman acquired, like shepherds, a subtle facility which permitted them to read where others saw nothing. They owed to this superiority a certain independence which also confirmed their exceptional position. Every one, in fact, needed their services without their having occasion for those of others. Having power to hasten or delay the passage of him whom they transported, they kept him constantly dependent without ever being so themselves. No one would therefore willingly provoke their malice.

Robert Letour, established as the mouth of La Vilaine, knew these privileges and availed himself of them. The son and grandson of ferryman, he maintained the dignity of his profession. During the twenty-six years in which the ferry of La Roche Bernard had been confided to him, no traveller had reason to complain of his want of punctuality or imprudence, but none had with impunity essayed to impose upon him. His only assistants were his wife and his daughter Claude. Although they both had the same mother, never did brother and sister present a more striking contrast. The first was a handsome youth of twenty-four, dressed with studied neatness and educated at the schools of Yannes, where he was cited equally for his good sense, good qualities and gracefulness; the second, on the contrary, deaf and dumb from her birth, wore a petticoat of blue linen, a blue silk camisole and a coat of russet stuff; her bare feet and arms were tanned by the sun. There was something of hardness in her coarse features and robust form, which seemed to place her without the pale of her sex, and made it difficult to divine her age. In reality she was but a few years older than Urbain; but imprisoned in her silence, she seemed to have become petrified. Meanwhile, under this forbidding exterior was concealed a singular penetration. This time which others spent in listening

and replying, was employed by Claude only in observation. Her father knew this, and never failed to consult her in his uncertainties. They had invented a language of signs which they alone comprehended, and which permitted them to exchange their ideas to the great surprise of the neighbors, to whom these mute communications were a perpetual source of wonder.

On a beautiful evening of September in the year 1839, several peasants were assembled at the foot of the steep declivity which led to the ferry of Robert, admiring the curious telegraph of the ferryman, who was giving by signs to the deaf mute, orders executed as soon as understood. They were returning from the fair of Marzeau, and awaiting until the last load should be complete, before crossing to the opposite shore.

"St. Anne!" exclaimed a young farmer who carried in his hand a scythe, "there is a perfect woman! Never any bad words, and always ready to obey."

"Well, then, if she pleases you so much, Pierre," replied somewhat sharply, a little peasant girl, standing opposite the farmer, "what hinders you from offering her the ring of alliance? Claude will be rich, and all the young men want at present is a few pieces of silver to jingle at their girdles, and a watch in their pockets."

"As for a watch," observed the ferryman, "I have an idea that Pierre already has one as well as yourself, Manon; it would even seem that they keep the same time, for one of you never crosses to cut hay on the other shore, but the second immediately arrives with a scythe."

All the spectators began to laugh; Manon blushed to the roots of her hair.

"It is then by chance," stammered she.

"It is not that it is not," replied the ferryman, "but at least you should not accuse Pierre of avaricious desires, seeing that since he has been marrying with you, Manon, he no longer visits the girl La Noistriere, and yet it is said she is so rich that she does not know what to do with her money."

"Well, there are enough who are not like her, and who know how to make a good use of it," resumed an old peasant; "what think you of M. Richard? I look at the house he has just built there, near the dock-yards."

Pere Surot (this was the name of the peasant) pointed to a new dwelling built at the edge of the hill, before which had been commenced the terraces of a garden descending to the river. The ferryman cast upon it a glance in which the attentive observer might have read malice mingled with envy and vexation. "Yes, yes," muttered he between his teeth, "the great architect, as he has been called since he has employed all the carpenters of La Breteche, has now become a gentleman. It is he who is to furnish the timbers for the new bridges by which he will make, it is said, a very large speculation."

"Yet everybody who has dealings with him is dissatisfied," returned Pierre, lowering his voice.

"It is true," said Surot; "but, as he fears no one, everybody fears him."

"Not I," objected the ferryman.

"You are right; you often carry his merchandise," observed Pierre; "how do you settle with him?"

"As one man with another; I do his work and he pays me for it."

"Without threat or complaint?"

"Threats and complaints are but words," said the ferryman.

"But they sometimes lead to blows, do they not?"

Robert's eyes sparkled. "Not with us," said he; "if it should ever happen, I know the means of revenge; him as gentle as a lamb. But may Heaven preserve us from quarrels. Neighbors should always live in peace."

"Especially as the daughter of the architect is very polite," added the young farmer. "I will engage you have no cause to complain of her, Master Robert?"

On the contrary, said the ferryman, "Renée is always ready to render a service."

"She has a chance to do so," interrupted young Manon; "left an orphan without a cent, she has found a godfather who gives her all she wants."

"Do not think this is pure generosity," resumed Pierre; "it is said that Master Richard is indebted to her for the best part of his gains, for it is she who holds the pen, and we know that correct accounts are very essential to success in business."

A new company of peasants had arrived, completing the number of passengers, so that Robert was now ready to push off. The boat, heavily laden, advanced slowly against the current which the descent of the tide rendered more rapid; Claude and Urbain were at the oars. The ferryman was seated forward, where he gave orders and received the fare. He had just dropped the last piece of copper into the pocket within his vest, when the boat reached the middle of La Vilaine. A last sunbeam was illuminating, at the summit of the neighboring hills, long yellowish lines which indicated the trenches where the cables of the bridge were about to be bent. The peasants pointed out to each other the work almost completed.

"The first bridge is a sad sight for a ferryman," said Manon.

"Fear nothing, my daughter," said Letour, "a step of dignity; 'that will not trouble me for, no sooner will it be finished, than the ferryman and his boat will go to seek their fortunes elsewhere.'"

All the peasants exclaimed:

"Is it possible!" repeated the nearest; "what, Master Robert, will you quit the country? And where then will you go?"

"Where poor people still need the services of a poor man," replied the ferryman. "Thank God, there remain rivers where he will be welcome."

Pierre exclaimed whether he had already chosen his new station; but Robert refused to explain himself farther. Some of the neighbors then

recalled that he had been absent a few days the preceding month, during which he had doubtless been in search of a spot where he could establish himself.

Manon looked at the young ferryman. "For my part," said she, maliciously, "how will he accustom himself to live elsewhere, and no longer to see the pretty girl of Master Richard?"

The young man seemed to be disconcerted; she laughed.

"Come, come, I say nothing," resumed she, "it is only to teach you that I have eyes as well as other people. But the boat is at the landing, be a good child, Urbain. Good-by, Master Robert."

She had resumed her basket, fastened her cape of serge, and left the boat with an alert foot. Urbain, who had appeared embarrassed and who doubtless wished to avoid questions, assisted Pere Surot to disembark his parcels and to carry them home, leaving the ferryman singularly perplexed.

When Claude saw her brother disappear in the company of the peasant, she hastily rose, ran to a little hillock whence she could perceive the route he was following, looked after him some time and returned with gestures of vexation.

"Well, what is the matter, girl?" asked the ferryman.

The deaf mute replied by signs so rapid and so multiplied, that her father appeared to have some difficulty in comprehending them.

"So, so," said she, "I am continuing to translate aloud, as usual, his gestures and those of Claude; 'are you angry that Urbain has gone with Pere Surot? Why so? It is to render a service to a neighbor. You think he has gone for something else; that he expects to meet some one; who then? What are you pointing out to me on the other shore? The house of Richard? Is it possible the boy has any thoughts of Renée?'"

The deaf mute multiplied her affirmative signs, accompanying them with her shrill cry. "Ah," exclaimed Robert, "it is very possible. This is then the reason why he is so sad since we are about to leave the ferry? Yes, yes, I remember now that he never fails to be on the path of Renée, and that she always has something to say to us, or ask of us. And I have not seen it. Poor man! it may well be said that our eyes are good only to look into our neighbors' houses."

Claude continued to confirm her opinion by signs with increasing irritability; the ferryman folded his arms. "I believe you," resumed he in a tone of chagrin. "I know what makes you so uneasy about it. The wife of the boy Urbain must rule in the house, and you are afraid of having a mistress. That must one day be, but if I please Heaven, it shall not be the god-daughter of Master Richard, no; my inclination is elsewhere. I will appeal to Urbain—or perhaps to the girl. It is hard to tell which would be the best."

As he murmured these last words, the ferryman sat down on the edge of the boat, where he seemed to fall into an anxious meditation. He was evidently reflecting on the discovery he had just made, and the means of breaking the bond of affection which had been formed without his knowledge between his son and Renée. He was aroused from his reverie by an exclamation of the deaf mute. Claude pointed to Urbain, who was emerging from a path at a little distance accompanied by his young neighbor. The architect's daughter wore the elegant costume of artisans, and there was in her whole person a fragile and delicate grace which revealed the lady. She held in one hand a green parasol, and in the other an old volume with leather covers, and walked slowly with her head inclined towards Urbain, as if they were in familiar conversation. It was only on reaching the boat that she raised her head, met the glance of the ferryman and saluted him. She congratulated herself aloud at having found him on this side of the river, and announced that her god-father, who had stopped at the inn to leave his carriage there, would rejoin them without delay. He was returning with herself from the forest of La Breteche, where they had been, as usual, to make the fortnightly payment.

As she said this with a volubility slightly embarrassed, she had entered the boat and taken a seat towards the stern. Urbain, who had followed her there, took up the large book which she had just deposited beside her.

"May one look at it?" asked he.

"What a question!" replied Renée, laughing; "do you not recognize my old Barmecide?"

Robert started up.

"The volume of accounts," said he, taking it; "that which was lent you the other day, and in which you found a leaf wanting?"

"Where?" asked the young girl.

"It should be here," said the ferryman, opening the book at a page spotted with mildew.

"It is!" exclaimed Urbain. "Ah, father, can you read now, that you found the place so well? See, the leaf has been torn out, for a piece of it is still remaining."

"Well, I knew nothing of it," replied Renée; "to tell the truth, I never open the volume except when I go to La Breteche, to settle the accounts with the carpenters."

"Here are the proofs of your walks," said Urbain, who had taken the Barmecide from his father, and showed here and there between the pages of figures, a pressed flower which seemed to mingle with the dry text some sweeter memories.

The god-daughter of Richard smiled, and began to turn over the leaves of the old book with Urbain, stopping at each of these rustic tokens to relate where she had gathered it. The ferryman, anxious and still folded under his shawl, continued to continue his review, with his hands inclined towards each other, and their breath mingled still the angry gestures of the deaf mute warned him of it. Then he hastily arose from his reverie, knelt his brow and ordered the youth to go to the forge to get an iron that had long been wanted.

The order was given in a tone which permitted no objection or delay. Urbain rose with evident displeasure, strode over the benches of

the boat, and slowly directed his steps towards the town. Robert followed him with his eyes until he had disappeared, and then turned towards the young girl.

The latter was arranging the flowers in the book with a delicate care, which proved less her love of order than the destruction of her mind. He looked at her a long time without speaking, like a man who is reflecting. Evidently he hesitated what part to take with the god-daughter of Richard. The ferryman had known her as a child, and seen her grow up under his eyes, in the familiar habits authorized by neighborhood, until the moment of her entrance into the convent school where the same pupils of it, this separation of five years, joined with the elegant and discreet manners of the young girl, had imposed on him. Besides, in the interval the fortune of Master Richard had augmented, and it was the distance which separated the families. The ferryman instinctively felt this. Be- come more timid with Renée, he had accustomed himself to pay her a sort of an anticfeference. Nevertheless he still retained at heart the memory of their former intimacy; the young girl had not made him forget the child. So, after having hesitated for some time, he hastily approached her, placed his hand on her shoulder, and said in a low tone:

"I must speak to you, Renée."

She raised her eyes towards him with an in- quisitive and anxious smile.

"To me?" said she, "and of what?"

"Of the boy Urbain."

He felt the young girl's shoulder start beneath his hand.

"You need not tremble," continued he, with a little impatience in his tone; "we must converse without pretence and with friendship, for I have an idea that you wish us well, Renée."

"Ah, you may believe it," exclaimed she, in a voice of emotion; "there is no person here or elsewhere to whom I wish more happiness."

"I thank you, my daughter," said the ferryman, in a more gentle tone; "therefore you will not desire that the boy Urbain should longer grieve me. Since I have spoken of leaving La Roche, he has neither courage nor cheerfulness."

"And why must you leave?" asked the young girl, in an accent of plaintive supplication.

"Why?" repeated the ferryman; "you should not ask me that, Renée; you have heard me tell the reason too many times. You know that I cannot remain here, and that it is the boy's duty to accompany me. Until now, no one of our family has been ashamed of the occupation of his father; the boy must be what I am, what his father was; he must live in the boat of the Letours by his labor and his courage; this is our glory, as it is that of gentlemen to preserve their estates and to live by doing nothing. I have held the position of master long enough; Urbain's turn has come, and henceforth it must be for him that the boat furrows the river."

"So you have already chosen your new place?" asked the young girl, troubled.

The ferryman made a sign in the affirmative.

"And it is, perhaps—very far off?" added she, hesitating.

"Very far," said Robert; "not to mention that the ferry is rough and sometimes very dangerous; but the boy is old enough to have an assistant."

"An assistant?" repeated Renée, without seeming to comprehend him.

"What then?" resumed Robert; "have you forgotten former times, my daughter? I when Urbain and Claude had their mother, have you not seen her manage the oar, and pull the rope?"

"I have," said the young girl.

"Then, continued the ferryman, 'the boy must also have someone who can aid him in his business, and—I have found her.'"

Renée started up as if struck by a shot, but she suppressed the exclamation which half opened her lips.

"Yes," continued Robert, "I have found, where we are going, the daughter of my own cousin. She is strong as a young sail and gentle as a lamb; just what I sought, for the boy needs a brave creature who will have a heart in her arms, and not a lady."

The young girl made a movement which he perceived in the shadow.

"I did not mean that for you, Renée," added he, with a little embarrassment.

"Does your son know your intentions?" asked she, without raising her head.

"No, yet," replied the ferryman. "I wished first to mention them to you, because, as you please, you can render me sad or contented."

Renée attempted to interrupt him.

"O, do not say otherwise," added he, taking her hand; "speak openly, my poor girl, and let us think that the good God hears us. If the boy is unhappy at the thoughts of leaving, it is on your account; if he no longer has a taste for labor, it is because he is thinking of you. You have bewitched him! honorably, I know, my daughter; but do not attempt to deceive a neighbor and an old friend—acknowledge what you have in your thoughts."

"Excuse me, Master Robert," stammered Renée, with wounded dignity; "my thoughts should not be acknowledged except to the priest who confesses me; but I declare to you that there has never been a question such as you speak of between your son and myself."

"Then he has not spoken to you of his friendship, and you have made him no promise?"

"Never!"

The ferryman seized her hand.

"Then give me your word that you will neither listen nor reply to him in future," exclaimed he; "I ask it as a favor, Renée. Do not think that I want of respect for you. As true as there is a God in heaven, I wish only your good; but it is for this very reason that I ask you not to give Urbain any hope. There is in my mind a hindrance. Then, neither your positions nor your fortunes are suitable for each other. Soon, or later, my poor children, you will both see this; and you must not be deceived together on the same ground. The god-daughter of Master Richard has too much delicacy to be-

come the wife of a poor ferryman. Better young men than Urbain would be proud to give her the silver ring."

"It remains to be seen whether their fathers will be less proud than Master Robert," resumed the young girl, in whose voice tears trembled, although she forced a smile; "but then, now, I will remember the fifth commandment. You may sleep in peace; it will never be by my will that your son forgets his obedience."

And as the ferryman would have thanked her, she added precipitately:

"Enough, enough, some one is coming; peace! You may be heard."

At these words, she rose hastily and went to sit down at the other extremity of the boat.

Claude, who had followed with a look the preceding scene, remained with her eyes fixed on the young girl, and was attempting to read on her features, by the starlight, what she had been unable to divine by her attitude and the gestures of the ferryman; but, annoyed by this attention, Renée turned, bent her head, and revealed only an obscure profile, half effaced in the shadow.

The persons whose arrival had hastily terminated her conversation with the father of Urbain, were new passengers, among whom was the god-father of Renée, the architect. Robert recognized him afar off by his loud voice, which seemed to impose silence on all the others, and by his step, in whose resolute there was something aggressive. He wore a brown coat and a wolf skin cap, whose hair was mingled with his grayish whiskers. His small and bloodshot eyes, his red complexion, dilated nostrils, and compressed lips, gave him a strikingly disagreeable appearance. Richard advanced, twirling in his hand a strong stick, along which had been incised a copper band, bearing the divisions of a measure. He entered the boat last, and sat saluting the ferryman by name as the others had done, reached the middle bench, and cried out to him to push off.

Robert remained immovable, with his elbow resting on the boat-hook.

"Well, did he not hear me?" resumed the architect.

"Hullo! ho, sleepy head, off, we have no time to lose."

The ferryman half turned with affected nonchalance.

"If Master Richard is in such haste, he has but to use his bridge," said he coldly.

"What is the matter?" resumed the god-father of Renée; "you are pleased to be jocular, this evening. I tell you that I pay my passage; when do you intend to start?"

"When my boy has returned," replied Robert, tranquilly.

"How, is it your son whom you are awaiting?" exclaimed Richard, with an insolent laugh; "very well, it is all right; we are then to wait the convenience of the young Urbain! Let us see, you should have learned your trade as long as you have been ploughing La Vilaine. Do you know what a ferryman is?"

"Yes," said Robert, looking at him; "he is a man who has no civility for those who have no politeness."

The blood rushed to the face of the architect, who rose.

"Do not provoke me too much; will you cross, I say? No! Thousand devils, we shall see."

"Stop, god-father, here is Urbain; we shall go now," interrupted Renée.

The young man in fact arrived with the iron, and sprang into the boat.

Almost at the same instant, the boat left the shore. The night had completely closed in, not a star was to be seen in the sky, and the two shores were soon concealed by the fog. The few passengers dispersed about the boat remained silent; nothing was heard but the stroke of the oar against the silica of the boat and the gurgling of the water beneath the prow. Suddenly a gleam crossed the night, and a shot resounded on the right bank. Every eye was turned in that direction.

"God save us! some one is out hunting very late," observed one of the passengers.

"The game is hunted better at night," replied the ferryman.

"What?"

"That by which our revenge is gratified, or whose property we inherit."

"It is nothing," hastily interrupted the architect; "some boy is amusing himself in burning powder stolen from the miners."

"It is possible," said Robert; "but perhaps the same might have been said eight years since, when the shot was heard that killed Antoine Burel."

Richard made a movement.

"In fact, that must have been in this direction," said he.

"Farther up the river," replied the ferryman; "there, before La Roche Veste."

Another deed of the "chouans"—royalists of La Vilaine—resumed the architect; "they had sworn to revenge themselves on Burel, because, they said, 'he had acted as a spy for the blues. If the game-keeper of the count had not died in prison, we should have known the truth from him.'"

"That is not certain," said Robert, shaking his head.

"Why so?"

"Because I have an idea that the game-keeper was not present."

"What do you know about it?"

"I know—what I saw."

Richard hastily raised his head.

"You!" exclaimed he; "did you see anything? But when you were summoned before the judges, you said nothing at all."

"The ferryman and me are not policemen," replied Robert, dryly.

"And then we do not know how much harm it may do us to speak out," added one of the passengers. "The count, who seems to have been suspected, was a man of great importance; whoever had injured him would have had reason to repent; but he died the day before yesterday, and may God have mercy on his soul! Now, Master Robert can speak without any danger."

The ferryman responded to this indirect invitation only by shaking his head. There was one of the distinctive characteristics of his class, and they had made it at once a point of honor and a safeguard. If their post revealed observation easy, and permitted of certain discoveries, their isolation exposed them without defence to the ill will of those whom they might compromise by their indiscretion. In a position to learn much, they must show great prudence, if they would not have much to fear.

So, contented with having it understood that nothing escaped them, they in general avoided saying more, thus securing at once their reputation for clear-sightedness, and their safety. Robert therefore did not seem disposed to push farther his revelations on the murder formerly committed near the ferry; but the architect undertook to compel him to do so. He recalled him with his habitual audacity, defying him to establish his insinuations. There was something singular in the contest of these two men, in the fervent tenacity with which the one urged the other to speak, and the impatient effort which the latter made to keep silence. At last Robert appeared to be driven to extremities.

"Then you absolutely insist that I should relate the circumstances," exclaimed he, with his eyes fixed on Richard.

"It seems to me you have had time to prepare your story," replied the latter, eagerly; "let us hear, old fellow, what did you see?"

"I saw," said Robert, slowly—"I saw the assassin of Barel."

All the auditors approached him; the architect burst into a laugh.

"Famous!" said he, "and perhaps you even spoke to him?"

"No," replied the ferryman, whom these mockeries had at last animated; "but I can tell you how the story was fired, and why no traces of him were recovered."

"Let us hear," said Richard, who had seated himself to listen.

"Well, then," resumed Robert, "it was one evening like this, perhaps, not much later, a little before midnight; the sky was so low that it touched the river, and the rain was so fine that one could not hear it fall. I was in the bottom of my boat, under a piece of tarred canvas; I was trying to sleep, but found it impossible to close my eyes. The night was so quiet that one could hear the fishes leaping in the current. As I had, in spite of myself, my ear on the watch, it happened that at a certain moment I recognized the steps of a traveller on the road; he seemed to be approaching the river; I distinguished the sound of his staff on the pebbles. I looked; a shadow seemed to appear at the delivery of the hill; it arrived before La Roche Veste, when suddenly a star was fired, and struck the lone traveller."

"This was Antoine Barel?" interrupted several voices.

"As you say," resumed Robert; "he had received two balls in his side, and fell dead instantly."

"But afterwards—what did you do?" asked Richard, evidently interested.

"I was about to spring to the shore and hasten to La Roche Veste," replied the ferryman; "but as I was pulling the rope for this purpose, I heard something plunge into the water; I turned, and what did I perceive? A head floating in the current and advancing towards me. I had only time to throw myself back into my boat; the assassin swam close by it, and passed me with head up and gun at his belt."

"So that you recognized him?" interrupted the architect, leaning towards Robert.

"Have I not said that it was night?" replied the latter, without raising his eyes.

"Then it might have been the game-keeper of the count," objected a passenger.

"If the game-keeper had known how to swim," replied Robert.

"In fact," said Urbain, "when he fell last night into the pond at the manor, he would have been drowned, but for the gardener."

"Paradise, I will engage he was returning from the cabaret," interrupted the architect; "a few glasses of cognac will paralyze the best swimmer. But attention; we have arrived. Renee, are you asleep, my dear? Come, up!"

The young girl, who had remained a stranger to all that had been said, rose at the voice of her god-father, took up the old account-book, the little tacket, the parasol deposited on the bench, and hastened to land.

Urbain, standing beside his car, hoped for an edict, or at least for a glance; but she went away in silence, reached the turn of the road, and disappeared without having looked around.

CHAPTER II.

Renee kept her word; from the time of her conversation with the father of Urbain, she carefully avoided opportunities of meeting his son. Before, she had constantly some request to make in the name of her god-father or for herself; not a single day had passed without seeing her at the house of the ferryman, or without Urbain's presenting himself at the new dwelling of the architect; she suddenly ceased her visits and avoided those of her young neighbor. The latter, at first surprised, sought in vain to discover the cause of such a change. As Renee had affirmed to Robert, their intimacy had been until then confined to a tacit preference, which could give no pretext for an explanation; free from reciprocal engagements, they had nothing to ask. The ferryman had interfered at the moment when the chains, already fastened to each heart, had not been united to form a common bond. No avowal had been made, and they had acquired no right over each other. It was therefore easier for Robert to lay aside her habits of familiarity, without leaving to Urbain a possibility of complaint.

Meanwhile, if the silent love of the young man had left him without privileges, it was not the less ardent nor the less absolute. It had incessantly seized his whole being; he had made it the only object of his meditations; the sudden abandonment of Renee took away from him

this secret occupation of his life. On ceasing to see her and hear her almost every hour as in the past, he felt around him a sort of void and general silence.

He had at first multiplied attempts to approach the young girl; but when he recognized her evident intention to avoid him, he thought his attentions had displeased her, and that she must renounce all hope. He therefore ceased his pursuit with the discreet dignity of those who respect themselves enough to know how to respect others. Only the effort crushed him; precipitated suddenly from the height of his hopes, he remained, so stunned by the fall, that he became insensible to all around him.

Claude, who had observed and comprehended all, in vain redoubled her attentions; he seemed not to hear.

Sometimes, when the ferryman, encouraged by a silence the cause of which he could not divine, alluded to the projected union, Urbain would start, then shake his head; and as Robert persisted, would say with emotion:

"Do not talk of that, father; I have no idea of marriage, and, if it pleases God, will remain as I am to serve you."

The ferryman had hoped that this depression was his intention, and that the sadness of the young man would be overcome with time; contrary to his expectations, it increased from day to day, and from week to week. Urbain did not complain, but he had ceased to sing, he never laughed, and every time his father turned towards him, he surprised him with his eyes fixed on the new house of the hill.

The first days of December had now arrived; the melting snows had swollen La Vaine, whose troubled waters rolled over their mirth bed strewn with the fragments of inundations. Some coasters, detained in the river by the bad weather, were moored along the shore, and their crews were thronging the wooden cabarets built on the banks for the civil and military workmen employed in the construction of the suspension bridge. Contrary to his habit, Urbain often joined them, and his father, who needed his arm to assist in managing the boat, was obliged to send for him two or three times.

The ferryman at first endured these absences quietly enough; but one day, when Urbain had delayed him above measure, he lost patience and spoke out. The young man had just leaped into his boat, and the darkness of his eyes gleaming with a brilliancy which the ferryman attributed to his libations at the cabaret; he cast upon him a severe glance.

"If you have no interest in your friends at home, it seems to me you have in others," said he, with suppressed irritation; "I have not seen you so courageous and so contented for months."

"Excuse me, father," said Urbain, "if my blood is more active than usual, it is not because I have a more joyous heart."

"It is then because the brandy of the coasters is stronger," resumed Robert, ironically.

"No, no," replied the young man gently, "it is only that I have found a remedy for our troubles."

Robert looked at him with an air of inquisitive interest.

"It is too many months since there has been good feeling between us," resumed the youth; "you, Claude and myself are not what we once were; this cannot continue longer. Some day or other, when the storm at my heart torments me too much, I may forget the friendship I owe you; you will withdraw your friendship from me, and, after such a loss, I could not live."

"Very well," said Robert, softened and touched by the tone of his son; "but if you wish to please me, what hindrance you from doing so?"

"Ah, you know too well, father," exclaimed Urbain, fixing his eyes on the ferryman. "By the words you have said, and the glances I have seen you cast on the new house, I have recognized that you guessed the truth. I had heard of it."

"And where is your malice?" interrupted Robert, with an indignation tempered with tenderness. "Is not your soul your own? Can you not turn it in another direction?"

"I have tried," said the youth, discouraged, "but all has been useless. While I am here, my heart will go in the same direction with my eyes. It is in vain that I do not see her or speak to her; everything around me shows her to me, or talks to me of her. The only method of cure is therefore to leave all, and to go far away; so my course is taken, my father, and I come to ask of you my dismissal."

"You?" exclaimed the ferryman, astonished; "what you leave us? Have you thought well of what you are saying, Urbain? Would you leave Claude and myself alone? Have you then no regard for your kindred?"

"It is quite the contrary, father," replied the young man, moved; "if I had less affection for yourself and for Claude, I should remain here; but sooner or later sadness will overcome me, and then God knows what might happen! The captain of the lugger opposite there wishes to take me as a sailor, and I have promised to go with him."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Robert, changing countenance, "and you pretend to depart in this manner of your own will?"

"Excuse me, father, I wish also the consent of yours."

"And that will never be given," interrupted the ferryman. "Are you not ashamed to abandon us when the river is swollen, when we need your arm, and my old strength has only yours to lean upon? You would leave all the labor for a man and an old man? Do you wish that for want of an arm, some misfortune should happen to the passengers to give color to the necessity for a bridge?"

"Do not seek to detain me, father," exclaimed Urbain. "Believe me, it is better that I should leave you, than remain—how I know! I might—Ah, for the sake of all, father, do not prevent my departure."

There was, in the features, in the gestures, and in the accent of the young ferryman, a wild agitation shared by Robert. Claude, from the first moment attentive to the discussion, had approached. Her eyes glanced from Urbain to

Robert; all her faculties seemed occupied in divining their words by their looks and movements. At the kind of supplication last spoken by her brother, she took his arm and uttered her convulsive cry. The ferryman pointed to her.

"Do you hear the creature entreating after her manner?" said he, with emotion; "she also has need of you!"

The deaf mute interrupted him by gestures of interrogation.

"Yes," replied Robert, "yes, my poor girl, you have understood it; but fear nothing; I will compel him to remain with us."

Claude replied negatively.

"What?" resumed the astonished ferryman; "are you also leagued against me? What significance these signs? The youth is unhappy here. Is that my fault? If he remains, misfortune will happen. And what misfortune?"

Claude pointed, with an energetic gesture to the black waters, which were whirling around the boat. Robert turned pale.

"What mean you?" exclaimed he. "How! Could Urbain! You are mad, Claude; it is impossible. You say you are sure of it! He has already thought of it! Do you hear her, Urbain? Is this true? Answer me!" he added, with strong excitement.

Urbain sat down on the edge of the boat and hid his face in his hands.

"What?" resumed the ferryman, after a moment's silence, "have you indeed been faithless to your baptismal vows, and wished to die by your own hand?"

"I have warned you," murmured Urbain in an abrupt tone. "At this time, my heart bleeds at that I lose my self-command, and feel an impulse to die. Yesterday, on crossing with Claude in the little boat, when we arrived at the middle of the current, I was sorely tempted, it is true. I rose in spite of myself, with a cry of sadness, and put my foot on the edge of the boat. The water looked inviting, but Claude detained me and looked at me with an expression which made me ashamed. I resumed the oar—only my ideas frightened me, and this is the reason why I wish to depart!"

"And how do I know that you will be wiser elsewhere?" objected Robert. "There will be no longer any one to dispel your evil thoughts. And is it on Renee alone that your suffering or your contentment depends?"

"Alas!" replied Urbain, his voice growing weaker. "I have not wished it, but it is the truth. I will not tell you how I love her, father. I can only assure you that with her, all would seem good to me: poverty, the rudest toil, a bad name; she would be to me a remedy for all. But why should I think of it? I see that she despises me, that she would not be the wife of a ferryman, so I can no longer hesitate, my father. I must say adieu, though it should be for eternity."

Here Urbain was overcome by his emotions, and Claude who saw his eyes swollen with tears, clasped his arm with gestures of compassion and friendship. Robert, standing before the brother and sister, united in this embrace, looked at them for some time in silence. A great conflict was taking place in his heart, and he betrayed it on his countenance by rapid changes of expression. At last he passed his hand over his forehead, as if to drive away the cloud of thoughts which had collected there, raised his head and perceived some travellers at the summit of the steep bank. Turning then towards Claude and Robert, he hastily exclaimed:

"Come! up and to the oars! here are passengers. We will speak again of our affair on the other side."

The brother and sister wiped their eyes and obeyed. The new comers were the carter of Master Richard; they had brought the oxen and horses of the team, which were embarked with some difficulty. The boat traversed rapidly enough the first quarter of the passage, but, arrested at the channel, it drifted as usual, notwithstanding the efforts of the men. Such were, in fact, the difficulties of the crossing, that diligence embarked at midnight had reached the other shore only at six o'clock in the morning. The voyage was therefore long enough to permit Robert to reflect, and when he reached the other shore his resolution was taken. He himself aided to disembark the teams, gave to the teamster in a few words a direction which Urbain did not hear; then drawing the boat by the rope to the starting-place, moored it, and beckoned to the young man and the deaf mute to follow him to their dwelling.

The house of the ferryman was built at the foot of the cliff which bordered the river. Along the wall had been piled the remnants of old boats, useless oars and fragments of ropes which were intermingled with tufts of myrtle and the twining branches of Bengali roses, formerly planted by Urbain, now neglected. The habitation had only a ground floor, divided into two rooms, the first devoted to domestic uses and garnished with good bedsteads, closing with slides; in the second, without any particular destination, the best furniture had been collected.

From the ceiling was swinging a ship with sails armed with copper cannons; on the mantel-piece was a wax image of the infant Jesus enclosed in a glass case, and beside it busts of Paul and Virginia.

It was here that the ferryman entered with his daughter and son. The silence which he had until then preserved, his abstracted air, the cheerless place into which they barely entered, all had prepared them for a serious act. Claude remained near the door, with cautious air and watchful glance, while the young man slowly advanced to the oaken armchair which occupied the extremity of the room, and leaning against its carved corner, waited for his father to speak. The latter walked about for some time without saying anything, went to look out of the window, then recommenced his walk in silence.

After a long period of expectation, the brother and sister exchanged a glance of surprise; at last the latter, less patient, addressed to Robert her interrogative cry.

"Patience! patience!" replied the ferryman, beckoning with his hand.

Claude pointed to Urbain, who was waiting with downcast head and folded arms.

"I know," replied Robert; "the fate of the boy must be decided, and that without delay; but one person is still wanting."

"Who, my father?" asked the young man.

"You shall soon know," said the ferryman, listening; "for, if I am not mistaken, some one is coming."

A light step was in fact just heard in the adjoining room, and stopped at the door; Robert went to open it. Renee appeared on the threshold.

At sight of her, the deaf mute and Urbain uttered an exclamation of surprise; the god-daughter of the architect stopped, confused.

"Pardon me," said she, without daring to raise her eyes, "I thought to find Master Robert alone. I have just been told he wished to see me. The carter's boy must have made a mistake."

"Excuse me, my daughter; he told you the truth," replied Robert; "I did indeed expect you, and, perhaps in a different manner. The good God guides the world as he pleases, my daughter, and we move at his will."

"I hear you, Master Robert."

"Well then—I have to tell you that the boy Urbain has become sad, that he is weary of this neighborhood, that he wishes to quit us."

The young girl started and turned pale.

"And you? you will not detain him, Master Robert?" asked she.

"I would do so," resumed the ferryman; "but he cannot, he says, remain longer. He has too great an affliction at his heart."

"But perhaps you can remove it," objected Renee, in a low tone.

Urbain did not allow Robert to reply. Surprised at first at the entrance of the young girl, then at the words pronounced by his father, he seized at last, with a sort of despairing eagerness, the opportunity which was offered to him.

"No," exclaimed he, "you know too well that neither he, Claude, nor myself can do anything. And as Renee had risen, affrighted at this species of explosion, he continued, moving towards the door, and with increasing vehemence: "O, do not go! let me for once say all! Before our separation, I must relieve my heart. Know then, Renee, that if I wish to go, it is because I cannot longer endure your scorn."

The young girl uttered a mournful exclamation, which seemed to protest.

"Is that not the true word?" resumed Urbain; "when, instead of living in friendship as formerly, you turn your back on me, as you may see me; when you reply to all my questions by only yes and no; when I have recognized that you no longer wish me well as heretofore, and that perhaps it matters little to you whether I am here or there, living or dead?"

The young girl clasped her hands and turned towards the ferryman, her eyes bathed in tears.

"Do you hear what he says?" exclaimed she. "You have but to reply to him, my daughter," answered Robert.

"O, no, not I!" resumed she; "I do not know what to say; but tell him, Master Robert, that it is not my fault, that I was obliged to do as I have done! You, who are his father, restore to him courage and joy."

"That would be difficult," said the ferryman. "I could indeed promise him that you would become to him all you formerly were; but that would not suffice. At present, in order to restore his courage, he must be told that his affection does not offend you, and that the home of a poor ferryman seems to you as pleasant as the fine dwelling of the great architect. Would it be the truth, my daughter, tell me?"

Renee, blushing and trembling, could no longer restrain her tears; she attempted to conceal her face in her apron, but the ferryman gently urged her to reply; then bending over his shoulder, she murmured:

"Console him—no matter how."

Urbain, who had approached to listen, uttered a cry, and threw himself on his knees on the other side of the old man, who clasped them both in his arms. As for the deaf mute, as soon as she comprehended what had just passed, she struck her closed fists together, uttered her mournful cry and dashed from the room, shutting the door with violence.

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ties of M. Lenoir, a young over-seer in the employ of Master Richard, might inspire some uneasiness in this respect. Urbain, who appeared to have been made unhappy by the scene, realized them anew, and Renee blushing confessed that the young man had several times essayed avowals which she had found some difficulty in interrupting. Her god-father himself had perceived the inclination, and, for some days past, had several times laughingly alluded to it.

This revelation rendered the necessity of speaking to Master Richard more pressing. He was then absent; but it was then decided that the ferryman should call upon him immediately on his return, acquaint him with the attachment of the two young people, and solicit his consent to their union. Meanwhile, Renee returned to the new house, and the two Lenoirs to their ferry-boat.

Here they found the deaf mute, who cast upon them a furious glance, and turned away her head; but neither of them noticed it. Urbain, transported by his unexpected happiness, saw and heard nothing. He walked in a sort of enchantment, intoxicated, bewildered, and no longer feeling the ground beneath his feet. On his side, Robert reflected on the step he was about to take, and seemed to struggle against some secret anguish. A few periods thus rolled away in a silence disturbed by the gallop of two horses which stopped at the summit of the hill; the riders were the architect and M. Lenoir. Arrived at the entrance of the winding road, they slackened the pace of their steeds and exchanged a few words, after which the young over-seer directed his course towards the workshop, and Richard towards the new house.

Urbain then cast a glance upon his father, who responded by a sign to this mute solicitation, left the boat and re-entered his dwelling to prepare for his visit to the god-father of Renee. Meanwhile, the architect, who had alighted from his horse, had just entered the first room on the ground floor, where his god-daughter awaited him.

The change of fortune had not changed his habits. Although his new house had been built, as he loved to say, in city style, and he had reserved in it a parlor, a dining-room, and a study, the large room destined for a kitchen was the only one ordinarily used. It was there that he took his meals, that he received his workmen, that he prolonged the winter evenings with some neighbors in order to *endire* both one light and one fire, an economical principle transcribed to him by his master, which his new position had not been able to make him renounce. At the moment of his entrance, Renee had just put his plate on the end of the long oaken table placed near the window. In the large fireplace a great fire of fagots was blazing, before by a turnspit, which was of which was whirling. This sound and the flames lightened the harsh countenance of the architect.

"Ah! ah! it seems I have arrived just in time," exclaimed he, opening his nostrils to the succulent odors and casting upon the golden fowl a look which tasted it in advance. "You have done well, my daughter, to make ready, for I have acquired on the route the maldy of the fowls; I have dreamed only of chickens and eggs! Let us see, I must drink first to prepare the way."

"[CONCLUDED NEXT PAGE.]

If judges would make their decisions just, they should behold neither plaintiff nor defendant, but only the cause itself.—*Littigton*.

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[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

LINKS.

Written on the subject of a celebrated actress being an acquaintance of the author under an assumed name.

BY M. V. H. LENOIR.

The namelike grace of form and face,
That little dimpled chin,
The mischievous glance that seems to dance
From eyes in which that smile;
The light, quick step, the bright red lip,
The voice that all must win
In speech or song, to none belongs
Save this, sweet Fanny Gwyn.

Didst thou believe thyself to wear
Into a stranger's shape
By change of name? No, thou'rt the same,
Despite of Andy Blake.
Despite thy pranks and convent ranks,
Thy sweet disguise is thin;
If Paul, the elf, is this one self,
Then thou art Fanny Gwyn.

So well you take all parts, you make
Each character your own;
A nymph you dance, again we glance,
And lo, the by to go!
And in her place, another face,
Almost another tone.
Now as 'tis plain you turn each brain,
It surely were no sin
To say a spirit takes every night
The form of Fanny Gwyn.

[Translated from the French for The Flag of our Union.]

The Ferryman of La Vilaine.

BY ANNE T. WILBUR.

[CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 191.]

He disengaged from his wrist the thong which fastened to it his travelling staff, and deposited it behind the door of entrance. The young girl took up the pot of elder placed on the table, and was about to fill the silver goblet of her god-father, but he stopped her with a gesture.

"Not so! not so!" said he. "When one has swallowed the northwest wind for six hours, one has a right to mix with a little cognac."

Renee brought what he demanded. He half filled his goblet, emptied it at a draught, then, clearing his voice and taking a long breath, like a man who has recovered self-possession, he added, drawing his chair up to the table:

"Well! now you can serve me, I am ready. What a dinner for an archbishop you have here, my dear! Say, were you not expecting some one else?"

"Who besides you could I expect?" asked Renee.

The architect nodded his head and winked. "Well, well," said he, cutting a thick slice of brown bread; "but I know the colors! I would put my hand in the fire that on seeing me depart this morning with the young overseer, you thought I should bring him here to eat soup!"

"I can promise you, god-father, that I was not thinking of him," replied Renee, hastily.

"Then you are ungrateful," replied Richard, "since he thinks of you."

The young girl started; he looked at her with a smile.

"Ah! that is the way with you all. At the first word of a husband, you jump like a frightened horse. I will not retract what I said, the overseer loves you."

"I hope you are jesting, god-father," murmured Renee, beginning to tremble.

"When I repeat to you that I am sure of it!" exclaimed the architect, striking the table with his fist, "and the proof is that he has avowed it to me!"

"Ho!"

"In person, my beauty! and he has taken no cross road; after having told me this, he has asked permission to marry you."

"But—your head was not replied to him?" interrupted the young girl anxiously.

"What do you mean? you must think I have been badly brought up!" returned Richard.

"Learn, my girl, that every demand deserves a reply; I have told him that I would mention the thing to you, and that, for my own part, I forswore no inconveniences."

"But I can see then," replied Renee, much disturbed, "in the name of Heaven, god-father, do not encourage M. Lenoir, or make him any promise!"

The architect laid down his knife and fork, and turned towards the young girl.

"Do you refuse a youth who suits me?" said he, striking the table; "do you set up your will in opposition to mine?"

"But—god-father—" stammered the young girl.

He seized her hands and drew her roughly towards him.

"Let us see," added he; "approach, that I may read in your eyes what is passing in your soul; is true that you will not marry the overseer? Reply, yes or no?"

"Well, no," stammered Renee.

The blood mounted to the face of the architect, whose eyes sparkled.

"No?" repeated he, shaking his god-daughter's arms violently. "You shall explain this word to me. Speak! I will know what hinders you from marrying the overseer."

"I think I can tell you, Monsieur Richard," interrupted the ferryman, who had just pushed the half open door, and who, passing at the entrance, had heard the last words pronounced.

The latter turned towards the new comer.

"What's that to you?" exclaimed he, who asked you to meddle? what is your business here?"

"Have a little patience," said the ferryman, "you shall know."

He had closed the door after him; the architect then perceived that he wore his pantaloons and jacket of green cloth, and held in his hands his new hat, a costume reserved for Sundays and great hats. He was rolling, besides, between his fingers a paper which the practised eye of the architect immediately recognized.

"I will wager he has brought his account," said he, with the ill humor invariably excited by the prospect of the payment of a bill.

"It is time," said Robert, reaching forth the paper, "the note of the transport of merchandise made by our boat for Master Richard fell under my hand just now, and I took it that Renee might herself make the calculation of what is our due."

"It is well," said the architect, seeking a subterfuge to postpone this verification, "but when you entered, we were speaking of another matter."

"Ah! yes," said Robert, slightly embarrassed. "Master Richard was, it seems to me, speaking of some ideas of M. Lenoir with reference to Renee."

"Who refers to?" finished the architect, "and it appears that you know the cause."

"That may be," replied the ferryman, smiling, "and it is my opinion that you also might suspect it, Master Richard; when a young lady refuses a husband, it may usually be supposed that she is thinking of some one else."

"Ah! it is that!" interrupted Richard, fixing his threatening glance upon the young girl.

"Well! I am very glad to know it. His name! let us have his name!"

Renee made a gesture to prevent the ferryman from replying; but he had advanced too far to be willing to recede.

"Our neighbor should know it," replied he, "since he daily calls for the youth Urban at the ferry."

"What can it be your son?"

"You have said it."

The architect struck his hands on the table and rose.

"I might have suspected as much!" exclaimed he; "we have crossed in the boat too often, sooner or later life will catch in tow; but I am sorry, my old neighbor, the overseer is more to our minds, and your boy has but to seek elsewhere."

The young girl cast down her head, clasping her hands; Robert appeared not to accept this reply as decisive.

"Master Richard should remember that nothing can be done without Renee," said he, "and surely, she will give her consent only to him who has her affection."

"You think so?" replied the architect, ironically. "Well! I tell you that I will lead her before the priest as we lead a child to school; do you hear?"

"That remains to be seen," replied the ferryman, shaking his head, "and I should like to have her speak her mind."

"Let her speak it then!" interrupted Richard, "who hinders her? Come, make haste! you need not wear and roll up your apron-strings; speak! speak!"

The young girl raised her eyes, then cast them down, tremblingly.

"My god-father should know that no person can control their preferences," said she, timidly. "I care not whom you prefer—but whom you will marry," returned the architect.

"And why should not my god-father listen to the request of Master Robert?" added Renee, in a low tone.

"Why?" repeated the architect. "I will tell you; because Lenoir suits me, he has a place, he can assist me; we shall never find such another opportunity, and it is a prize in a lottery for us."

"For you, perhaps, Master Richard," said the ferryman; "but Renee has a idea of marrying a little on her own account."

"And on that of your son?" interrupted the architect. "Ah! I see the thing now! you have secured the little one, and would urge her to disobey me; but she shall never bear the name of your boy."

"Our neighbor forgets," said the ferryman, "that Renee is nothing to him, and that he has no right to prevent her from choosing according to her fancy."

"Well, if what I have done for her has been a bargain, it obliges the two parties, does it not? Should not my expenses in money be paid in obedience? Let Renee show her gratitude for her services; it is on this condition that I feed and lodge her. What have you to reply?"

"I have to reply," said Robert, "that the girl has long ago paid her debt to you, Master Richard, and that, for the future, there is a home near, where she will be received, not as a mercenary who must pay for her support in services, but as a daughter of whom one asks only that she shall be happy—it is for her to decide."

He looked at Renee, who, leaning against the wall, with her arms hanging down, and her head drooping, seemed a prey to a hesitancy full of anguish.

"One word will be enough," continued Robert, somewhat impatiently; "if your heart is no longer turned in the same direction, acknowledge it frankly; I will go and tell Urban that we were mistaken."

"Ah! do not think so," interrupted the young girl, extending her clasped hands towards the ferryman.

He seized them hastily.

"Then you still continue in the same ideas?" asked he, stooping towards Renee.

"Still!" repeated the latter, pressing closely to him.

He put his arm around her.

"You hear, Master Richard," said he, in a resolute tone, "the child has made her choice, and it would be of no use to hinder her, seeing that she is here to aid her in case of necessity, and that she is ours from this moment."

"Did not your mother tell you, when she confided you to my care, on her death-bed," exclaimed the architect, "to do nothing without my advice—to obey me as herself?"

The young girl made a sign in the affirmative.

"And yet," added Richard, "you disobey her and break your word, to follow a lover. Go,

then, but remember that you alone must render an account to her at the last day!"

He stepped towards the door: Renee stopped him. As he spoke, she slowly detached herself from the ferryman, and seemed to be engaged in an inward conflict. At the last words of her god-father, she closed her eyes, extended her arms towards him and murmured:

"I will keep my promise, I will do nothing against your will."

Robert would have cried out.

"Ah! say nothing, my father," added she with a supplication so tender, that the old man stopped, troubled; "I must obey her who is in the cemetery. I have promised to wait for my god-father's permission, I will do so. Only say to your son, that if I am not his wife, I will be the wife of no one."

And without waiting for a reply, she placed her hands on her face, ran to one of the doors and disappeared. There was, after her departure, a moment of silence. Robert remained with his eyes fixed on the door through which she had fled. The architect had approached the table; he mechanically filled his goblet, emptied it, then, addressing himself to the ferryman, said gloomily:

"You understand; that is ended. Now you can return to your boat."

Robert cast down his head and remained immovable.

"Well! is the man dead?" resumed the architect. "What keeps you? Are you waiting for anything?"

His glance encountered the note deposited on the table.

"Your bill, perhaps," added he. "In fact, I should prefer to settle it, and have done with you. Let us see, the little one pretends that with the book it is but the affair of a moment."

He took from an *etui* the old Barmecide and brought it to the end of the table, where were already an inkstand, pens and several registers. At sight of the volume covered with parchment, the gray eyelids of the ferryman contracted; a gleam shone from his eyes, and he seemed a prey to a singular excitement; but Master Richard perceived nothing of it. He had begun to read the figures of the bill, but, whether by pre-occupation or inexperience, became confused, recommenced again and again, and at last threw aside the bill with an oath.

"Take your bill and settle the account yourself," exclaimed he.

"That is easy," replied the ferryman, "especially if Master Richard will lend me the book!"

The architect pushed it towards him and rose. "And be quick about it," added he. "This evening I shall go to La Roche, to see my mother; on my return, you can give me the bill. To-morrow it shall be paid, and then I have done with you; I will buy a boat for my own use, and shall have no further occasion for yours."

The ferryman took up his bill, with the old Barmecide, and went out without replying.

CHAPTER IV.

Urban awaited his father's return with anxiety; but the latter disappointed his impatience by announcing that he had not been able to see Master Richard alone, and that it had been necessary to postpone the explanation until the morrow. He added that he had ensured a tete-a-tete with the architect, on the morrow, by offering to bring him various receipts promised for a long time, and which he must demand at Marseilles. As he expected, the young man proposed to go for them immediately, and set out notwithstanding the lateness of the hour. As soon as he had started, the ferryman left Claude in charge of the boat and returned to his dwelling, where he remained shut up for a long time.

When he at last came out, he had resumed his working clothes, and held in his hand the newly made harpoon.

Whoever had studied the expression of his features might have noticed something more gloomy and more resolute than usual; but the descending night concealed them from Claude.

When his father entered the boat, she was crouching as usual, with her head bowed on her hands, and her elbows on her knees. The ferryman did not at first seem to see her. He remained standing at the extremity of the boat, and his glance rested first on the new house, where a light was gleaming, then on the hills and the river enveloped in the fogs of night.

The retiring inundation had brought from every quarter uprooted trees, fragments of roofs, half-sundered hayricks which were vaguely seen to pass in the darkness. A mournful wind, which blew from the west, bore, at intervals, the roaring of the surges against the rocks of Trobiquier. Urged by its breath, the rising tide was crowding back the high waters of the river, which were whirling with sinister sounds. The ferryman seemed to be consulting all these signs; he assured himself that the boat-hook and the oars were in their place; then advancing towards Claude, laid his hand on her shoulder.

The deaf mute started up as if moved by a spring. Robert beckoned to her to follow him to the other extremity of the boat, and then commenced between them one of those conversations by gestures of which we have already spoken. Although accustomed to this mute language, Claude seemed at first to have some difficulty in comprehending it. Robert was obliged to repeat some explanations several times; at last he seemed resigned, then easy; but he cut short all observations by a sign which ordered blind and immediate obedience. The deaf mute inclined with a submissive air, took the harpoon which she concealed at the bottom of the boat, and crouched again in her accustomed place. Almost at the same instant a shadow appeared at the declivity of the hill, and a man, who seemed to be coming from the hills, was seen to descend.

"I am here," answered Robert.

The shadow commenced the descent, and reached the station. It was the architect in his travelling costume. He crossed the plank of embarkation and gained the middle of the boat, where he remained standing without saying anything, enveloped in his goat-skin and with both

hands on his staff. The ferryman, equally silent, approached the plank, which he threw on the land, and hastened to push off. Claude then seized one of the oars, while her father took the other, and the boat, turning on itself, began to cut cross-wise the thread of the river.

At the first moment, no sound was heard but the measured stroke of the oars mingled with the rubbing of the water; but, as soon as the shore had disappeared in the darkness, the ferryman relaxed the movement of his oar, and, addressing the architect, said hastily:

"Master Richard has not started, I suppose, without having consulted Renee by some kind word?"

The architect made a movement of surprise.

"What is that to you?" replied he; "attend to your oar, and do not gossip."

"I had hoped," resumed Robert, in the same tone, "that, when the ill humor of the architect had passed away, he would not take advantage of what the dear girl said, to make both herself and Urban unhappy."

"You care for the happiness of your son?" said Richard, with a laugh of hatred. "Is there anything in common between us?"

"Who knows?" said Robert, in the same calm and firm tone; "we ferryman see a little of life, Master Richard; should they be provoked too far, they might tell some things which would embarrass you."

"I defy you," exclaimed the architect.

"Do not say so," resumed Robert, shaking his head; "for not long since, you urged me to extremity in the presence of others, and I was obliged to relate a story, which you cannot have forgotten."

"I! what story?" asked the architect; "I do not know what you are talking about."

"Ah! you do not remember?" said the former, ironically; "well, then! the other day you counselled me to relate how Antoine Burel had been killed."

"It is possible," said Richard; "but what is that to me?"

"Nothing," continued Robert, "only I might have told more."

"What then?"

"I might have said I had not only seen the assassin, but also—I recognized him."

"You!" repeated Richard. "It is impossible! how could you distinguish him in the night?"

"By the moonlight."

"It is a lie! There was no moon."

"You were there then to know?" exclaimed Robert, looking him in the face.

Richard's countenance became livid.

"Wretch!" stammered he, "take care what you say! I understand your project. You wish to terrify me in order to make me consent to the marriage of Renee with your son; and an accusation is not sufficient."

"You are right," said the ferryman; "fear nothing, there will be proof—which you will not deny, for you have yourself furnished it."

"What mean you?"

"When the affair of Burel came out, Master Richard was suddenly absent," replied Robert; "so he probably did not know that there was taken from the wound of the dead man the piece of the shot which had killed him. It was a piece of the leaf of an old book, and the justice sought in vain for the remainder; but I found it."

"Where?"

"In your old account-book."

The architect could not suppress a cry.

"Now, as I have at this moment with me," continued Robert, "you will imagine that I can carry it to the judges, who will revise the affair, and once on the right track, they will have no difficulty in discovering why the foreman whom Antoine Burel was about to dismiss, found it more advantageous to put his master under the ground, than he might succeed him in business."

"You will not do that, you will not do it!" said Richard, with teeth set, and flaming eyes.

"That remains to be seen," resumed the ferryman. "I have been silent, because I said to myself, that by night the best eyes may be deceived; but for several months I have been sure of it—I have a proof: so Renee shall no longer be subject to your will. If, to restore her liberty, it is necessary to deprive you of yours, I will truly declare all."

"You shall not have time!" cried Richard. And throwing himself on the ferryman, he attempted to precipitate him from the boat. A wild cry, and the point of a sharp iron at his breast made him let go his hold. The deaf mute was before him, weapon in hand, ready to strike.

"Well done, Claude!" cried Robert, rising; "she understood my recommendation, and I did will to be on my guard. Come, Master Richard, pass to the other end of the boat, or I will harpoon you like a salmon! To the oar, Claude, or we shall not arrive to-night."

Richard slowly obeyed. Astounded at the revelation of the ferryman, he saw no escape except the proposed compromise, but his pride revolted. A thousand projects of escape and revenge were conceived and abandoned. As the boat crossed the river, the architect made a movement as if to spring to land, but he suddenly turned to the ferryman, and said:

"Can you swear that you have told no one of what you have just said, and that you permit his god daughter to espouse Urban?"

Let her espouse him then!" exclaimed the architect; "but you will restore me the book?"

"On the wedding day, as we leave church. No condition could be better calculated to hasten the marriage. Far from throwing new obstacles in the way, Master Richard, I occupied myself with urging on the preparations."

The guests were leaving the church with the bride couple, when they met the principal authorities of the department, descending towards La Vilaine, for the inauguration of the new bridge. They saw it ornamented with green branches, and led with a multitude who seemed suspended over the abyss, like a human garland. Thousands of men, women and children came to witness the ceremony.

The sun, at first buried in the fogs of December, seemed to wish to salute the new wedding; his rays suddenly dispersed the mist, and, falling in a luminous sheet, lighted up a ship which was passing at full sail beneath the feet of the throng. At this sight, an immense clamor of applausive acclamations burst from the people; the echoes, answered after this new victory of human industry.

Jester's Picnic.

A young man at a social party was urged to sing a song. He replied that he would tell a story, and then if they persisted in their demands, he would execute a song.

When a boy, he said, he took lessons in singing, and on Sunday morning he went into his father's attic to practice by himself. When in full play, he was suddenly seized for by the old gentleman.

"This is pretty conduct," said the father, "pretty conduct for a son of pious parents, to be sawing boards on Sabbath morning loud enough to be heard by the neighbors. Sit down and take your book."

The young man was excused from singing the proposed song.

"First class in mathematics, stand up. What is simple division?"

"Please sir, I know. Breaking Bob Smith's cake, and eating half yourself!"

"Right! What is compound division?"

"Hooking the whole of Bob Smith's cake, and dividing it between yourself and brother."

"You care for the happiness of your son?" said Richard, with a laugh of hatred. "Is there anything in common between us?"

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